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THE  
LIFE THAT NOW IS:

AND  
NATURE AND LIFE:

SERMONS

BY

ROBERT COLLYER,

PASTOR OF UNITY CHURCH, CHICAGO.

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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## PREFACE.

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THE name I have given to this little volume, is also the best preface. It is a selection of such sermons as I have been able to preach about the life that now is. If I thought that any apology was needed for saying so little about that which is to come, I would make this twofold plea; First, that so many better and wiser men have said so much about it already; and, second, I am so sure that if we can but find the right way through this world, and walk in it, the doors of Heaven are as sure to open to us as ours open to our own children when they come eagerly home from school.

R. C.

CHICAGO.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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FROM Wharfedale to the shores of Lake Michigan, from the village forge to the City pulpit, from the Methodist church to the Unitarian, are changes as great as any one man need expect to experience in a life time. Robert Collyer, the author of these sermons, passed through them all. He was born at Keighley, December 8th, 1823, but spent most of his boyhood and early manhood within sound of the old church bells of Ilkley—the Olicana of the days of Severus. Few men have been nurtured in the presence of more lovely or varied scenery. It is a pleasant picture to imagine the blacksmith's boy some forty years ago, bursting out from his father's smithy at Blubberhouses (Blue-berry houses we should call them if the hurry of life did not take so much of our breath), or from 'owd Jackie Birch's forge at Ilkley, bursting out with a touch of grime here and there on his ruddy cheeks, to learn his earliest lessons at the feet of Nature; lessons about the Fair and the Beautiful, about Freedom and Purity, which were dropped as lightly as thistledown into his growing soul, there to germinate in after times and under distant skies.

We may see him wandering with silent awe amidst the ever varying beauty of Bolton woods, now bright with the tender leaves of early spring, now swelling with the rich fullness of summer grandeur, now, too, when the mighty trees are standing silent but not sad in the mystic light of Autumn, clad in parting robes which change from glory into glory. Or we see him roaming over the moors that stretch for miles on both sides the sounding river, brushing the dews of Summer from the clumps of heath and fern, or pausing to watch the shadows of the clouds sweeping down the long hill-ranges, clouds which open here and there to let a shaft of light dart through, to make patches of vivid green amidst the purple and the brown. Aye, and under the *steel-blue wintry heavens* these moorlands must have been



as beautiful to him as they are to us to-day, their sombre stillness broken by the laugh of the grouse as they answer one another from the tufts of the frosted heather, or by the rush of the swollen streams as they leave their narrow sand-grooves and wash over moss and fern, combing out every filmy tress into quivering lines of emerald loveliness, and then bound on with many a headlong leap to hush themselves in the deeper music of the dear old river Wharfe. From sights and sounds such as these, to a bustling American city, with its rigid street lines, its blocks of stiff and stately masonry, and its ceaseless hum of business, must have been a change indeed.

Robert Collyer left England for the United States in May, 1850, taking with him a wife, who had been wedded one day. Up to that time he had been a working blacksmith, and continued to be for years afterwards, filling up the intervals of toil with the study of nature, local antiquities, and books.

As he rested beneath the overspreading tree which used to fling its flickering shadows on the old smithy, or book in hand strolled along the river side, or sat amongst the huge boulders on the moor, how eagerly and how patiently he followed after knowledge! To him the quiet little village became an audience chamber, crowded with the great and good of all ages. He had found a spell by which he, a workman with a leather apron, could summon round him in free and friendly converse, men who now stand higher in the estimation of the world than kings. Some enthusiastic admirer of our eloquent Yorkshireman bought and carried off the anvil he once worked upon to America. He is welcome to it—we do not need to look upon it to be reminded that God's elect workmen may be called from the humblest occupations. They have come at His bidding from the plough, the coalpit, and the cobbler's bench. He loves to pour the oil of His consecrating Spirit on foreheads often beaded with the sweat of honest toil. Robert Collyer does *not need to have it near him* lest he should forget the level

from which he rose. He has never forgotten it. He remembers his former work, and home, and friends, with love and pride. He has visited his old home twice. He often writes to the friends of his youth. Bits of the quaint Wharfedale dialect break out in his writings. Illustrations and anecdotes of former days crop up in his sermons; and although we never discover in any part of what he does a single piece of uncouth, jagged, or unfinished workmanship, we do discover a sincere and enlightened sympathy with toiling men and women, such as none but a man who had once eaten the hard won bread of daily toil could feel.

Surely we may be proud of a man like Collyer who, having won honours in the New Country, can yet stand up and say that he is proud that his grandfather fought with Nelson at Trafalgar, and that his father was an Englishman and his mother an Englishwoman. There are many such on the other side of the Atlantic, with the memory of the dear old Fatherland safely enshrined within their new experiences like the heart of oak within its bark—men and women whose thoughts, prayers, and tender memories, linked the Old World and New together, long before the Atlantic cable made them one.

Mr. Collyer was a member of the Methodist Church when in England, and continued so for some years after he reached America. In both countries he was an earnest and popular lay preacher, but his views of Christian doctrine which had been gradually diverging in some respects from the views held by Methodists became at last so different that he was compelled to abandon his fellowship with them. He joined the Unitarians, or as they love to style themselves in America,—the Church of the Liberal Faith. On leaving Philadelphia he was called to take charge of a mission in Chicago in the beginning of the year 1859. By his eloquence, sympathy with progress, genial disposition, and broad charity, he soon became very widely known and honoured. Ten years afterwards, his *Mission Room* becoming too small, Unity

church was built for his growing congregation. This was burnt down by the great fire of 1870. Standing amongst the ruins on the Sunday following the conflagration, surrounded by his homeless flock, the Pastor read the words of the prophet Isaiah—"Our holy and our beautiful house is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste." The second Unity church has arisen above the ashes of the former, larger, handsomer, and untrammelled by debt; and to-day Robert Collyer, its minister, is one of the foremost preachers in America.

By this volume of Sermons, now first published in England, he will address very many of his countrymen who have only heard of his name. They will be prepared to receive his words with respect, and to weigh them with candour. In America, the Preacher of Unity Church is heartily welcomed in churches whose creeds have many points of departure from his own. Even some of the pulpits of his former associates are still open to him, for those Methodists who really knew Robert Collyer, have never ceased to honour and to love him. And now, he will not find that his fellow Christians in the Old Country are less liberal than the Christians in the New. Some, no doubt, will strongly dissent from a few of the doctrinal positions which these Sermons lay down, or rather, suggest, but even those who may differ from him on points regarded by themselves as vital, may gather many a precious thought and many a useful lesson. Few deal with dogma; most of them are intensely practical, and all are beautiful. Imagination, pathos, and humour, mingle with the strongest common sense. His counsels on Love and Marriage, his words to mothers and children, his expositions of the parables of Nature, are the overflowing of a true and loving heart, the heart of a Yorkshire Poet and an earnest teacher.

# S E R M O N S .

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## I.

### Vines and Branches.

JOHN xv. 5: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

It is entirely probable that these words were spoken in the spring-time, when the vines on the slopes and terraces about Jerusalem were opening into leaf and blossom, and when this analogy would have all the power and beauty that could come from the object as well as the subject. There, right before them, and all about them, are the vines, standing in the sun. Some of the branches are the genuine outgrowth of the vine itself. Others are only there by grafting. Some are strong, some feeble, and some dead; and the dead, as Jesus is speaking, the vine-dressers are cutting away, that they may not interfere with the living vines or disfigure the vineyards. But, strong, or feeble, or dead, there stand the stems, ready to pour their sap into every branch alike, or if they make any difference, to give their life to the lowliest first and in the fullest measure, that they which have the less sun may have the more sap, and more at least of life, if they have less of what makes life a blessing. So Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches, and my Father is the husbandman; and every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he pruneth it, that it may bear more fruit. Abide in me, and I in you; for as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

In this sermon I want to try to find this subject through the object, to see how the analogy is true, first naturally, second spiritually, and third universally; how it will hold good while vines and men continue to grow on the earth. It is not something once done, and then done with, but something that is *now*

*doing*, and that will be done to the end of time. In many great, true ways, living stems are still standing in the sun, with their branches strong, or feeble, or dead, about them; and the dead are still cut away, and the living pruned by the husbandman, watching and working for ever in this vineyard and among the vines which he has planted.

This truth of the vines and the branches is to be understood, first of all, in a natural sense; and we are to set aside, when we look at it in this sense, what we are fond of calling mystery, but ought rather to call obscurity, and to understand that Jesus meant, first, by what he said then, that these men, sitting or standing about him that day, were to be as intimately united to him through their spirits as the branches are united to the vine—were to draw their highest life through him from God, as these branches drew their sap through the stem from the earth, and were to drink in the sun and make the stem glorious by their fruitfulness, as did these branches on the vine; or, to demonstrate their deadness, in contrast with those that did drink in the sun and bear great clusters, and so fail to be what they might be, not because the sap refused to run and the sun to shine, but because they did not turn sap and sun to good account by bringing forth good fruit.

So that the power by which Jesus first drew Peter and John to his side, and held them there, was a personal and perfectly natural power; and we are not to think of it as a mystery, except as the influence of one life and soul over another for good or evil is always a mystery. Attracted to him, this one from his tax-gathering, and that one from his fishing, they had gradually felt the influence of his spirit running through their whole life; were never quite what they ought to be when he did not inspire them; they had no such power to live by as that which in some way they felt flowing out of his nature into theirs; and so they came in the end to see what he meant when he said, "Without me ye can do nothing." If you take a cutting from a feeble stalk, and graft it on a vignette stem, the books say the result will be that the graft will show a far greater vigor than it could have shown ungrafted; will reveal in fruit or flower, very clearly,

the new stock from which it draws its vitality. It was so with these men. They felt their life grow strong and good in the strength and goodness of their great Friend, and they were to feel it for ever, more intensely as the years went on ; then they were to send out and take in new branches in their turn ; and so the vine is at last to cover the whole earth. But whether in the world of the apostles, or in the world here and now ; in the way Jesus saved Peter, or in the way you are to save the blasphemer, who loves you and is influenced by you as he is by no other man, it is always the lesser growing better by the greater ; the weaker being grafted into, and drawing life from, the stronger ; the Son of Man for ever saved, and sanctified, and fitted for heaven by the Son of God.

So it is well worth our notice that this is, in a great general sense, a prime principle in life ; and that, whatever we may say about our individual freedom, the great majority of us are only free as the branch on the vine is free ; away back we join into some other personal life for our salvation, and draw from it, as the branch from the stem, our most essential vitality and power—that in a body or in a book, which is the spiritual body of the inspired thinker, some soul, larger and stronger than our own, has got hold of us, and is pouring into us its life, and moulding us this very day.

When Carlyle gave his address in Edinburgh, some years ago, the great hall was filled, not with Scotchmen alone, but with men who poured in from the distant parts of England and Europe to sit at his feet and drink in his words, because he is to them the vine, and they are the branches. When Mr. Emerson comes to our city, there are those sitting about his feet that will hardly listen to any other living man, because he is to them the vine, and they are the branches. When the gracious and good English queen was left a widow, she found that her life was so interwoven with the life she had lost from her side, as to bring an abandonment of sorrow such as the world has seldom witnessed, so sad it was and heavy ; because, though she was queen and he was consort, he was the vine and she was the branch. So Elijah was the

vine to Elisha, and David to Jonathan, and Paul to Timothy, and Socrates to Plato ; and the world is full of those vines and branches, because it is a natural law of our life. I meet every day men and women who feel that without Channing, or Parker, or Swedenborg, or Wesley, they can do nothing. The great soul has taken them in, and imparted its life to theirs. You may see, sometimes, a young man who will do no good at all until he gets a wife ; but then he does really become a man. Now, such a man may scoff at the woman question, as such men sometimes do, and say the common platitudes about the inferiority of the woman's nature to that of the man, as such men often will ; but a woman like that is replying, in her silent, steady life, all day long, "I am the vine, you are the branch, and without me you can do nothing." "I consider," says Dr. Arnold, "beyond all wealth, honor, or even health, is the attachment we form to noble souls ; because to become one with the good, generous, and true, is to be, in a measure, good, generous, and true yourself."

Now it follows, of course, that this which is at once so natural and universal, must be so far right ; because all wrong is unnatural, and, as I am compelled to believe, exceptional. But then it brings up this question : What life, in a body or a book, in earth or in heaven, is the one that can make the most of me, can do most for me, and inspire me to do most for mankind ? Can Webster and Hamilton, in political ideas ? In commercial morality, can the Lawrences and Hoveys ? Can Channing, Parker, or Swedenborg be supreme to me among men in faith, or Emerson in nature, or Tennyson in a far-reaching and delicate intuition ? Let me never be suspected of a want of reverence for a noble gift, for a sweet mastery for good, from whatever source it may come. William Furness, writing me once about the distinction made in a new Life of Jesus between the human and divine in his nature, said, "I regret the distinction, because Jesus is the *most* human being that ever lived, and therefore the most divine. His divinity lay in his pure humanity." It is what I think of in this personal relation of the vine and branches in the person of Jesus Christ. I have no need to go into mystery, except

I say the mystery that must always dwell in the way one soul inspires another and lives in it. I am simply to realize that if I can become united to Jesus Christ, as the branch is united to the vine, then I become a part of a life, before which Webster and Hamilton pale in their grasp of the principles we have embodied in our Declaration of Independence ; who was deeper in the doctrine of the fatherhood than Channing, and understood free grace in a way to make Wesley a dreamer ; and before whom princes of commercial morality stand with bared heads as they see the great guiding lines of the Sermon on the Mount.

“ One who, because he overcomes us so  
Because he is most noble, and a king,  
Can well prevail against our fears, and fling  
His purple round us, till our hearts do grow  
So close against his heart as not to know  
How weak they are alone.”

This brings me, secondly, to the true test of this union with Christ, what it is, and how it is to be distinguished, or in other words, the spiritual truth of the analogy.

And I need not take much time telling you, to begin with, that it is a very common thing for every great branch on this Christian stem to claim to be *the* true branch of the true vine. The Romanist bases this claim apparently on being the oldest branch, and the Rationalist on being the newest ; the Baptist on being the branch nearest the water, the Quaker on being so far away ; the Universalist, because it gets so much sunlight, and the Calvinist, seemingly, because it gets so little ; the Episcopalian, because every twig on its particular branch is trained and confirmed in a particular way, and the Unitarian, because each of its sprays is left very much to its natural instinct to grow as it will. And all these claims, as you know, have involved the Christian world in endless, and sometimes, shameful, persecutions. Now, will not this analogy of the vine and the branches cast precisely the light we need across the spiritual claims of the church and the man, and light up the whole question of what it is to share in this intimate life of Christ in a way that is never to be mistaken ? Suppose the branches on a vine could make this claim that is made by the



churches—that one would cry, “Believe in me, for I am the oldest branch;” and another, “In me, for I am the newest;” and this, “In me, for I am most in the sun;” what would be the natural and inevitable reply? There is but one, it is this: you are all alike in being branches on the one stem. But you are not united in this way merely to be most in the water or the sun; it is not a prime question, whether you are the oldest or the newest branch; the sole thing to know is, what fruit do you bear, and how does that fruit compare with what the other branches are bearing? If this branch out in the sun, or this that rejoices in its freedom, shall bear only a few dried-up specimens, while that near the water, or that away back in the shadow, is burdened to breaking, and that tied fast to ecclesiastical trellis-work wholly covers the trellises with its great ripe clusters, then the fruit-bearers are the true branches. If Calvinism can fill a man with love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, patience, and goodness; if it can send him out to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit the sick, pity the prisoner, and to break every yoke, while my faith, or any other, can only inspire me to tell handsomely and eloquently how it is done, but then to leave the real thing undone; to bring out beautiful blossoms that will fill a whole valley with perfume, but to let the blossom suffice and bear no fruit, the world does not hold a more empty boast than mine of being the true branch of the true vine.

But now let us put this just the other way. Suppose a man, making not the least pretension to any intimate union with this vine, one who says, “I know nothing about your claim, that before I can be what I ought to be I must be called after some special dogma, and in some way realize what you hold to be so essential to a fruitful life,—but there is my life itself.” And suppose you should see that such a man really does live well; that his life is good, his soul’s large windows free from blemish; that he is loving, long-suffering, gentle, patient, and good; that the wan face of sickness lights up in his presence, and he is feet to the lame, and a father to the poor, and breaks the bond of oppression, and causes the widows to sing for joy; what would you say to a man like that? You would say, “My friend, when Jesus was

here among men, he said, 'other sheep I have, that are not of this fold.'" Now, it is no matter to me that you disclaim this personal union ; you hold it all the same. You are one of the branches of the true vine, because you bear good fruit. It would really make no deep and abiding difference if you should say you do not believe in Christ. Christ believes in you, and has gone to prepare a place for you, and will come again, and take you to himself. For a real belief is not some mere opinion, this way or that, in the mind. It is the whole set and purpose of the life and soul ; so you can say, "I never taught in the streets in thy name ;" but he will say, "You taught the freedman, or sent a teacher to do it." You can deny that you ever cast out devils ; but he will say, "Don't you remember that man you picked up out of the gutter, and how you held on to him until he sat clothed and in his right mind ? Ye did it unto the least of mine ; ye did it to me."

But then it would be a very great mistake to claim that a man, living such a life, and disclaiming Christian ideas and convictions for what he was, and what he was doing, was, therefore, an independent vine of himself ; owed nothing to the sap that flows for ever from that inexhaustible stock in these Christian lands, and was the growth of a plant whose seed was altogether *in* itself. It is indeed seldom that this is so.

When a man lives a noble life, thinks great thoughts, does great things, shames Christian men by the intrinsic beauty and grace of his life, and yet disclaims connection with the Christian stock, I want to know how he has come into life ; and if he is the son of an unbroken succession of Christian ministers and men running directly through many generations, I say, then, that goes a long way to account for it. You are not a graft, but a natural branch of the great vine. It is true that you are able to live isolated from the special Christian line in the world to-day, but it is very doubtful indeed whether you could have done so well if your fathers had not lived in the Christian church of yesterday. And if a man in my city says to me, "I do not care for churches and worship ; I can worship at home ;" and then goes on to tell me how his good old father, the deacon, used to go to church in New England, I feel like saying,

“My friend, your father, the deacon, I suppose, left you very little money, but he left you a grand legacy of thought and feeling, that reaches up to heaven, and belongs there. The truth is, you are a birthright member of the Christian church. Away back you reach into the true vine. Now you have made your little legacy of money into a fortune, and may the Lord make you the happier for every dollar you are worth. But tell me now, how is it about that other legacy? Are you merely using up the interest of that, or are you dipping into the principal? Is the way you are living likely to end in your children’s having such a treasure of the thought and feeling that ennoble the soul as you had, or, in giving them more money, will you give them less grace? Nay, man, make it a personal matter. Tell me what your home worship is doing for the world’s salvation, what good fruit comes from it, and then I will tell you exactly what it is worth. For, if it bring the good fruits of the spirit and life that always come of any genuine worship of God whatever, your course is the next best to that of plunging heart and soul into some real Christian church and movement, such as would best answer to your longing and the world’s welfare. But if in your isolation you bear no such fruit, and are aware of an ever-slackening endeavor to do anything noble and good, then, I do not doubt that you are still a branch of the great vine; but every branch that beareth not fruit, He taketh away.”

But with these illustrations of what a far-reaching influence this of Christ is to us all, and in the most direct way, and what a strict account it holds with every branch on the stem, I say fearlessly, that this one test is the true test, and there is no other of union with Christ, or how I may know and prove it. I bear fruit, or I do not bear fruit; it is good, or it is not good. When that one thing is made clear, the problem is solved so far as I am concerned. Wherever you find a man bearing good fruit, there, whether he may know it or not, in a direct personal way, you find a man united to Jesus Christ,—a true branch of the true vine. I care not what you call him.

And so it is once more, that just as on the vine there is a vast complicated, yet perfect inter-action of one branch on another, as no one branch can possibly exist for itself, but draws in the

sunlight to send it down and through the whole vine, sharing what it has got with the others, and sharing what they have got, giving the strength, and getting the strength from them; a separate branch in every way, and yet in every way apart of the whole vine, so all these great churches, interests, and influences we call Christian, and know to be such, blend beautifully under all their differences and make the perfect whole. It is like what I experienced in Paris once. I wanted to hear Coquerel, the great French preacher, or at least to see his face, so I went with a brother preacher to his church. We found he was not to be there, and it was not church time. But groping along a dark passage in the basement of the building in the direction of some sounds, we came at last to a door, which opened right into a Sunday school, of at least four hundred children. We sat down quietly during the lesson. I did not understand a word they said. When it was over they prepared to sing. The superintendent gave the hymn. I was still in the dark, until at once the whole school burst out into one of the most familiar melodies we use in our Sunday school, one I had heard in Unity Church a hundred times, and then I seemed to understand all about it. It was like that old Pentecost, long ago, when the Spirit came down, and every man heard the disciples talking in his own tongue. So we say our own words in our own tongue, and are very careful not to get mixed up with others that are saying other words in other tongues, and we hardly understand each other at all. But some day we find a strange congregation at their worship or their work, and though we do not know the words, when they strike the same great chord, we are instantly in the whole spirit of the thing, and feel quite at home to the music. It is like the Portuguese Hymn, that is just as good, and gracious, and sweet when it rings in a prayer-meeting, as when it goes swelling and sounding through the grand mass. It is like the hymn-books we use in our worship, written by old saints of the Primitive Church, and saints in the church of to-day; by men and women, those whose hearts were breaking for sorrow, and those whose hearts could hardly hold their own for joy; by

men as wide apart as St. Gregory and George Dawson of Birmingham.

“But they are all made one in Christ  
And love each other tenderly,  
The old, the young, the rich, the poor  
In that great company.  
And there shall come a glorious day,  
When all the good saints, every one  
Shall meet within their Father's home,  
And stand before his throne.”

And then again, as in the vine the stem makes the branches strong with its strength, fills them with life out of its heart and supplies the sap, the one prime condition of their fruitfulness ; and they, in their turn, cover not themselves alone, but the stem also with glory, in the great ripe clusters they bear for the harvest ; so in this true vine, the spirit of Christ, out of which the life of the world comes pouring in a never-ceasing stream, the branches can cover the stem itself with glory and praise.

In Manchester, right in the heart of the vast modern city, you find a place two hundred years old, as quiet and still as if there were not a factory within a hundred miles. It includes a noble library of books, to which the whole world has free access, and a foundation in which a great number of boys are educated and fitted for life. More than two hundred years ago Humphrey Cheetham died in Manchester ; he was a rich man, and left his riches to found this college and library ; and there, from that time to this, through all the changes of time in England, forty or more poor boys have been housed and fed, educated and fitted out for life, and that great library of books has been as free as the air to all who wanted to read them. Now think what glory and praise have come in those centuries to that good name in the good this legacy to Manchester has done ; how all the world over, men have lived well and wisely, who could say, “I was one of the college boys in Manchester, and had free access to that library, and its nurture and protection made me a man, when I might have been a mere waif and weed in the great highway of the world !” It touches my final

idea of this great, true vine, that Jesus, who once entered into the heavens, left to the world this legacy, by which he is and is to be more intensely and gloriously present in his risen life than he was when Peter and John sat by his side in Galilee, as Humphrey Cheetham is more intensely and gloriously in Manchester, now two hundred and thirteen years after his death, than ever he was in his life.

O, friends, we read these new Lives of Christ that are pouring from the press! We are fascinated by Renan, and bewildered by Strauss. We get a glimpse of his presence in *Ecce Homo*, touch the hem of his garments in Schenkel, and almost see him as he was in Furness, and think how glad we should have been to be near him in his very living presence—to be one of the Twelve, and hear his voice, and touch his hand, and be healed by his power, and lifted by his Spirit to God. I tell you this identification is better than that intercourse—to be one with this great vine, as it now lives on this earth; to be one of the branches that draw their life from that vine, that catch the sunlight and rain, grow gloriously towards the heavens, ripen great clusters of fruit, and make the stem glorious in their glory,—this is to know Christ. We cannot read the life of Christ so as to understand it, until we enter into its spirit, any more than Jefferson Davis can understand the life of Abraham Lincoln. Loyalty to Christ's spirit and work is the best commentary, and the only one that can make Christ altogether clear to us. Go about the Father's business as he did. Send his Gospel far and wide; be ye saviours in your degree; take Christ into your hearts, and then there will be very little trouble about him in your minds. But then never forget that, he is the vine, God is the sun:

There is an awful and unspeakable distinction between the two natures. They can never be the same. He is the true vine, and the whole church—all true, fruitful souls—are the branches. Yet as vine and branch alike would be nothing without the rain and sun, so even this most blessed life of Christ in the soul would be nothing without God, his Father and our Father—God over all, blessed for evermore!

## II.

*The Thorn in the Flesh.*

2 CORINTHIANS xii. 7-9 : "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

WHAT is known in sacred biography as Paul's thorn in the flesh, has been a thorn in the pulpit expositions of all the Christian ages. Carefully concealing its nature himself, he has thereby set all that want to be wise above what is written, in a state of uneasiness to find it out. The result, as might be expected, has been very curious and quite inconclusive. One commentator is clear it was a defect of the eyes ; another is certain it was a defect in the speech ; and lameness has been supposed, and neuralgia, and a want of that dignity of appearance that is supposed to be indispensable to a successful minister ; and so almost endlessly, as different men have been led by different fancies, to this or that conclusion.

So I suppose it cannot be of much use to us to know exactly what this thorn was, since the man who suffered from it did not care to tell us. He certainly cannot have meant to put preachers into the perplexity that has come of his concealment. He may have felt it was too delicate a thing to be made a matter of common talk, even to the brethren, as most persons do who are in Paul's case. Be that as it may, he felt it was right to say that the thorn was there, and he could not get rid of it ; could not pray it out, or cry it out, or believe it out, or tear it out, or get the Lord to take it out. There the thorn was, whatever it was, and there it would stay, very likely, to the end of this mortal life. But then he found in the struggle to be free from the thorn, what in the end was better than any such freedom,—power and patience to bear his pain ; still the power was not his own, nor the patience, only the thorn. But

this was the end of it : the two things together carried him right to God, and laid him to rest in the arms of the Eternal. And as a sick child rests in the arms of its mother, unable to shake off the pain, but still wonderfully supported and comforted out of her love, so it was in his suffering, when God said, "My strength is made perfect in thy weakness."

Yet with all this hiding, there is one thing of the deepest possible moment, and that is, the reason why this thorn should be there. This the apostle cannot leave in the dark. He clearly feels that we ought all to know WHY the thorn came. It happened to him once, he says, to be just as happy as a man can be. It seems still, after fourteen years, that he was in heaven, whether in the body, or out of the body, he cannot tell. All he knows is, that these were the most exalted moments of his life : there he heard things he cannot report, because human language would fail to convey the idea if he were free to tell it ; and right in the heart of that experience he got his thorn ; it came then ; it was there still ; and the reason why it came is clear to him also. He was in danger of losing his balance, of being carried quite away by his felicity, and so losing the sense of his kinship to our pained and suffering humanity and his reliance upon Heaven, so there was given him a thorn in the flesh. And so it is when we know this much about the thorn, we can see that we do not need to know any more. The particular fact in the life of one man, opens thereby into an experience that is in some measure common to all. If we could know that Paul's thorn in the flesh was a defect in his eyes, or his speech, or a pain in his head, or the want of a foot to his stature, that particular thorn would fasten us down to a particular experience, and we should lose the great general lesson which I want to find, if I can, to-day, in speaking to you.

First, of the thorn in the flesh of our common humanity.

Second, what we can ourselves do about it, And,

Third, what can come to us with any thorn, if we can find out Paul's way of dealing with it.

And first, is it not true in a great general sense, that we all have some time a thorn in the flesh. Something that we do



not care to describe by particulars, any more than Paul did, and would never mention without grave reason, but there it is, as sure as we live, and as long as we live, touching us to the quick with its pain now and then, and never letting us go quite so free as we were before it first began to stab us.

In the ranges of our common human history, we cannot fail to see the presence of this thorn in the greatest and noblest lives. Sometimes it is one thing, sometimes another. Now on the surface, and now in the nature. Those that soar highest, as Paul soared when he saw heaven, bear it with them, or bring it back, and carry it, as we do, wherever they go. It may be a mean thing, like Byron's club-foot; it shall torment me for all that, as if there is no greater misfortune possible to man than to go halting all his days; or it may be as great a thing as Dante's worship of Beatrice, as he appears in the picture, with that face, sad beyond expression, looking up to the beautiful saint, whose "soul was like a star, and dwelt apart,"—it shall be a thorn all the same to each man. Or it may be a great vice, like that which seized and held Coleridge and De Quincey, and put them down in the dungeon of the Giant Despair. Or it may be only like the dyspepsia, that now, in these days, darkens the whole vision of Mr. Carlyle, turning his beautiful afternoon into a grim and lurid sunset. But it is a thorn all the same, to all alike. In king David it was a great sin he never could forget if he lived to be as old as Methuselah, that stabbed him in his sons when penitence and God's grace had plucked it out of his soul. In Peter it was the memory of that morning, I suppose, when he cursed and swore, and turned his back on the noblest friend that ever a man had. In Luther it was a blackness of darkness that would come when it was ready, defying both physicians and philosophy, and beating down the soaring soul as a great hailstone beats down a bird. In Wesley it was a home without love, and a wife insane with jealousy, with an old love hidden away in his heart that was never permitted to bloom in his life, and so on through all the tale. Paul has no singularity: we need not be anxious about his mystery: some of these things hurt him, and made [the poor

manhood of him quiver. The thorn in the flesh among the great ones of the world is a common possession. I said to a gentleman once, who told me he had been very intimate indeed with a great man, how was it that he should have fallen into such evil habits in his later life. "I must not tell you that," he said, "but I may tell you this, that he took to wine as a refuge from what to him seemed worse, at last, than drinking. It was pitiful it should be so, and he should do so; but knowing him as I do, I have always felt that my pity for him in these things should out-reach my condemnation." It was Paul's delicate and shrouded way of saying it is a thorn in the flesh; but I will not tell you what it is. I was talking once again with a gentleman who knows very intimately one of our greatest living Americans, a man whose name will stand high in our history; and speaking especially of the felicity of the good providences that have attended him, I said he must be one of the happiest of men. "There is that in his life," my friend said, "you do not see, and very few are aware of. I knew him a long time before I guessed it: it is a pain that he carries about with him like his shadow; not a bodily, but a mental pain, which he will carry with him to his grave."

And so it is with us all—what the thorn is to these men in their great estate it may be to us in ours. It is true we can all see here and there a kindly, easy soul, which seems never to have felt the thorn, one which has certainly never soared as Paul had when he caught it,—whose temperament will make it hard, one thinks, for even Providence to find the nerve. I am not sure such a nature may not be thorn proof: I think sometimes it is. They say some fishes will go on feeding after what seem to be the most frightful inflictions, and evidently feel no pain. I have thought there might possibly be such a temperament as that among men. I remember in one of our Love Feasts in the Methodist Church in England, thirty years ago and more, a man got up and told us how he had lost his wife by the fever, and then, one by one, all his children, and had felt as calm and serene through it as if nothing had happened; not suffering in the least; not feeling a pang of pain; fended and shielded, as he believed, by the Divine grace, and

up to that moment, when he was talking to us, without a grief in his heart. As soon as he had done, the wise and manful old preacher who was leading the meeting got up, and said, "Now, brother, go home, and into your closet, and down on your knees, and never get up again if you can help it, until you are a new man. What you have told us is not a sign of grace, it is a sign of the hardest heart I ever encountered in a Christian man. Instead of your being a saint, you are hardly good enough for a decent sinner. Religion never takes the humanity out of a man, it makes him more human; and if you were human at all, such trouble as you have had, ought to have broken your heart. I know it would mine, and I pretend to be no more of a saint than other people; so I warn you, never tell such a story as that in a Love Feast again."

That man was an instance of the sort of man who may have no thorn in the flesh. The old preacher saw it was not in the riches of God's grace, but in the poverty of his own nature, that he found his impunity from pain; and such impunity is possible to such men always; yet only as it is possible to fishes. But the law of life is to feel the thorn; the balance scale of ecstasy is agony. Poor Little Boston, in the exquisite story, still wanted to be buried in a grave six feet long. I never blamed Byron for feeling as he did about his foot; he could no more help that, with his nature, than he could help his lameness. The blame lay in his never summoning that strength to the maimed part, by which in his soul he could have outsoared the eagle, and outrun the deer,—the strength that is made perfect in our weakness.

And if I did not know that there is such a feeling abiding in some natures like a perpetual pain, I would not mention this in speaking specially of some thorns that can torment us. Certainly we do feel the pain of personal defect, and very naturally, because the standard of physical beauty and perfection is a thing civilised, and sensible men can no more alter than they can alter the standard of geometry. It was beautifully right in that old Mosaic religion which worshipped only Law, to enact that all offerings made to God should be physically perfect. The Lawgiver wanted to touch in this way the truth of

physical perfection. It was wise and good, too, as far as it went, that the old Greek should so carefully keep the ideal beauty he dreamed of as the perfection of humanity actually embodied in marble and bronze before the eyes of his race. I have heard it doubted whether the mother sees what we see when one of her children fails of this standard. I know you can never guess she does from any word that falls from her lips ; but she reveals her sense of it all the same, as the angels would reveal it, if such a thing as this imperfection were possible in heaven, by a brooding, watchful tenderness which knows no measure : which will guard and keep from the child itself the sense of the absent gift, while it magnifies immeasurably the gifts that are there. There is such a sense of what is fair and true in the outward appearance always in the common heart, that if we did not know this, we could still guess it, as we see the ceaseless efforts which are made to hide what are thought to be defects, as well as to create what are thought to be beauties, but are often blank deformities, like that mincing fall from the line of uprightness, just now the fashion among women. We admire and value physical perfection. We notice and pity defects, or laugh at them if we have a bad heart. There are those who have to endure them, to whom they are a thorn in the flesh, bringing keen suffering sometimes, always casting something of a shadow, and begetting a morbid brooding in some natures far worse than they themselves can ever be. A feeling of bitterness, a sense of unfairness, and a wish that everything else in life could be bartered for this one thing,—perfection of the form or face.

Then, again, Paul's thorn in the flesh may have been a defect in his utterance. I can see what a thorn it is to many, that they can never adequately express their thought. They hear men talk, as oil runs, word slipping after word, without break or end, until the vessel is exhausted ; or read essays and histories, in which the words fall into their place like music ; but in the orator or the writer they can see well enough that the thought bears no sort of proportion to the expression, while they feel they have something to say which would weigh with thinkers if they could only get it out of its matrix ; but

it is like a diamond away down among the sunless pillars of the world, and there it is likely to stay. "You will find him to be a great lumbering wagon, loaded with ingots of gold," Robert Hall said of John Foster, when some congregation wrote to him and wanted to know whether Foster would do for a minister for their church, "and I hope you know gold when you see it, or else he will never do for you." They called him, and he failed, as he had failed in Dublin and Newcastle, and I do not know where besides. "Brother Foster," William Jay of Bath said to him once, "why don't you come and preach in my pulpit? I have been after you for years; my people want to hear you very much; now, why don't you come?" "Brother Jay," Foster said, "I love to feel there is one pulpit in England in which I can preach still,—it is yours. Now, if I preach only once for *you*, as you want me, I shall not have a pulpit. I mean to hold on to my one chance." But we possess two volumes of lectures by John Foster, that are among the grandest things of their sort in existence. They were born, as he tells us, with a sore travail, and given to a handful of people. He stands for my thought of this thorn in the flesh, that is just a dull aching to get expression for what is in the mind. Great numbers have it in one way and another. It might not seem so from the deluge of words that is swamping church and commonwealth together: but it is so; and "I am slow of speech," is a very sad cry, as you hear it from such a man as first said it.

Nothing but Paul's saintliness again, and sure footing in dangerous places, has saved him from the guess that his thorn in the flesh was some sort of a bad passion or appetite. Very sore is this pain, and very common, and by no means so criminal as we sometimes think it is. In the far-reaching influences that go to every life, and away backward, as certainly as away forward, children are sometimes born with appetites fatally strong in their nature. As they grow up, the appetite grows with them, and speedily becomes a passion, the passion a master, the master a tyrant, and by the time he arrives at his manhood the man is a slave. There is no doctrine that demands a larger vision than this of the *depravity* of human nature. I believe, in the judgment-day,

which comes at last to every soul, two men may stand before the great white throne together, one with a great many bad things to answer for, and the other with very few; yet the one who appears to be the greater criminal, shall be deemed the better man; because he has fought his battle at a vast disadvantage, while the other has had everything in his favor. The worse man, as we have to call him, found when he got fairly into life, that these appetites and passions would rage, and tear, and trample over him, and had to be mastered at last by endeavors which would have saved ten men no worse tempted than the one who stands beside him. "Why don't you make an effort and put your passion down, once for all," a good friend of mine, a preacher, said to one of these poor sinners. "Doctor," he replied, "I've tried more, and harder, I believe, than you need try twenty times over, and I am nothing but an old sinner still." You see it is like two men coming of age, and getting each one a farm, and going to work to raise a crop. The one farm is fair and sweet, has been watched and tended and kept in good order; the other is as full of weeds and briars as a place can be, with all the fences down, and neglect wherever you turn. Now, what merit is there in the one man's keeping the good place good, in comparison with that by which the other has made the bad place better. Old Dr. Mason used to say, as much grace as would make John a saint, would barely keep Peter from knocking a man down. The appetite which has grown into a passion, that needs to be bitted and bridled, or guarded as you guard wild beasts within iron bars, is a thorn in the flesh, a dreadful sharp thorn, from which its possessor can never be free, as men are free who possess a nature full of fine balances; and to be a man at last under such disadvantages, not to mention a saint, is as fine a piece of grace as can well be seen. Every where about us there are those who feel this thorn. I heard a man say once, that for eight and twenty years the soul within him had to stand, like an unsleeping sentinel, guarding his appetite for strong drink.

And so I might go on to tell almost endlessly about these thorns in the flesh. With one man, it is every now and then

a black day, like those that came to Luther; with another, it is the bitter memory of a great sin, or a great wrong, or a great mistake, which stays like a ghost, and cannot be laid. It is a pain in the citadel of life with another, that can never be removed, but will rack and wrench at its own will, in spite of all that the doctors can do. While with men like great Edward Irving, and Robert Hall, and Jonathan Swift, it is the fine edge, as sharp as that over which the Mussulman dreams he will pass into Paradise, dividing the most transcendent genius from its saddest ruins.

Now, then, secondly, I was to ask what we can do about it. I say, we ourselves can do one of two very different things,—we can make the best of it, or the worst of it. And I do not mean just now what Paul did with his thorn when he went to the Infinite Mercy about it, but what we can do about ours, apart from the question of that Divine Power to help us, which I shall have to mention thirdly, as the most blessed thing of all. If I find myself, for instance, in early life in the possession of a passion that is rapidly growing into a curse, I can submit to its dictate without a struggle, as I see some do, can give in to its fascination with a shameful subservience, I can let it drag me down into its caves and devour me alive, or I can stand up and fight it; I do not say conquer, I say fight with all the might there is in me; fight for my life as I would fight for my home, and my wife and children, or any thing that is supremely worth fighting for; because I take it, that apart from God's grace, there is a certain manliness possible to every man who is still in any sense in possession of himself.

I notice the police in London have lately asserted they never feel in any danger from the secret malice of the London thieves, no matter how often they may have brought them into trouble, if, as they say, they have been on the square with them, told the exact truth about their rogueries, and shown them such fair play as even a rogue thinks he has a right to. It shows how even in that utterly lost life, one little spot is still clear for the growth of some poor spark of manliness, that shall maintain the difference between the truth and the lie, while yet

the living depends upon perpetual falsehood. It is hard to imagine again, any man, as a rule, more empty of what we would call Religion, than the common soldier. His whole life, poor fellow, makes it very hard for him to have any sense of it, and he has very little. But it has come out since the great Sepoy rebellion in India, that numbers of these men in the English army were offered the alternative of renouncing the Christian religion and embracing that of the rebels, or being murdered by all the horrible ways the hate and rage of the pagans could invent. It is believed that they died to a man : not one instance as yet has come to light of any common soldier giving way. He might not be a Christian, or have seen the inside of a church since he was carried there as a babe to be baptized. He might only use the name of him who died on the tree for blasphemy, and have no conception of the grace that abides for ever at the heart of the holy church throughout all the world. But he was a man belonging on that side, and the pincers could not tear that simple manliness out of his heart, or the fire burn it out. He knew that his sisters and brothers sang the old hymns, and sent their children to the Sunday schools, and that the white-haired father and mother were at rest in the old churchyard. He knew no hymns, he had no children, he would be thrown to the tigers in the jungle what time his soul had gone out on its doleful way ; but he was a man of that stock. He might meet them again. He would tell them, if he did, that he died with the Cross in his eyes and not the Crescent, and so he went to his doom. And so there may be manliness where there is little grace, if by grace you mean that gracious thing, a pure and holy life and a conscious religion. It is all I plead for in this second thought. I may have the thorn in my flesh of a personal blemish. I can bear it like a man, manfully and modestly, until it almost shines with beauty. I may be always aware of my painful unreadiness and inability to be what my nature assures me I might be. I can be so manly in bearing my burden that my silence shall be golden. I may find myself in possession of an enemy within my nature, more dangerous than the whole banded might of the world. I stand for something still ; I do not belong on



that side ; I belong to the banner of the cross : a voice in my soul whispers, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet !" "Did I break down? was I unmanned?" one of the great men I have mentioned said, when the thorn in the flesh had hurt him so terribly that he lost his consciousness. He felt he must be a man even then. Indeed, I know no one condition of life in which the thorn can pierce us, which can reveal a more beautiful manliness or womanliness than our quietness through intense physical, or mental, or spiritual pain. To be steady then, is to be steady indeed. I bow before such valor with a bare head. To see the patient face on which pain has graven its lines, reflecting an unconquered soul, is to be aware of a royalty to which the purple robe and acclamation are a vain show.

I said, thirdly, we must see what can come of the thorn in the flesh, if we find out Paul's way of dealing with it.

From what he feels it clearly appears he can tell us about his own particular case, that he tried the best he knew ; bore his trouble man fashion, as well as he could ; but then found he was still unable to win much of a victory. The pain was there still, and perhaps the shame of it, and he felt as if he would have to give way at last, and go down, as Christian did when he was fighting Appollyon. So, in the simple old fashion, he took the matter into the Supreme Court, and said, "I want this thorn removed: I can bear it no longer: I am sick of trying to get along with it." But the Judge said, "No, it must stay: that is in the nature of things, and cannot be altered. To take it away would be to destroy the grace to which it points. I will not take the bane, but I will give you another blessing."

Lately, when I crossed Suspension Bridge, I got talking with a gentleman about the crystallization of iron. We agreed that every train which crossed the bridge did something to disintegrate the iron particles and break the bridge down. It was clear to us both, that if this process could go on long enough, there would be a last train, which would shoot right down into the green, boiling gulf, with all the horrors of a terrible catastrophe. But we concluded this would probably never come to pass, because we are finding out how long it takes to crystallize a piece of iron; and so, before there is any great danger, all these *strands and cables* will be made over again in the fire and

under the hammer, and come out as strong and good as ever ; so the fire and hammer, in such a case, would be in themselves the best blessing that can come to these ever-weakening strands. Nothing else could do them any good. To take them out, put others in, and then let these lie at rest on the banks of the Niagara, would be no sort of use. The iron-masters would laugh at you for doing that. They would say, "That will do more harm than good ; it will make the strands eternally unfit for their purpose : only the hammer and fire can make them very good ; and these can make them better and stronger than ever." Is not this also the law of life, that the fineness and strength essential to our best being, and to make us do our best work, come by the hammer and the fire ? by the thorn in the flesh, the trouble and pain in our life, which may act in us as the fire acts in the iron, welding the fibre afresh, and creating the whole anew (as the Apostle would say) unto good works ? We go along in our easy way, with nothing in particular to do or bear beyond ordinary duties and burdens ; and then there is nothing particular in our nature. But suddenly some great trouble comes,—some thorn in the flesh,—and breaks up the old monotony. The good time, in that sense, is over ; and then though we may feel sore, and savage about it towards the Providence that is above us, we are drawn towards those nearest to us with a new tenderness and trust. The strands that bind us are better ; we are better men and women. I dare trust the worst brute in this city to be good to his wife, if he has helped to nurse the buried babe she is breaking her heart about. The thorn, for the time he feels it, has made a man of him. And so we touch, right here, the element in the strength that Paul had, while he had the thorn. The trouble itself whatever it was, held the new power. He found it was as much more to his life, as Calvary is more than Canaan to the life of the world, and then he gave up all idea of getting rid of the thorn. So, as we can see that not the weddings, but the crucifixions, are the mighty things of history ; not the festivals, but the battles ; not the ovations, but the martyrdoms,—we find the first grace that can come from Heaven to help us bear our thorn in the flesh, whatever it be,—a personal misfortune ; inability to be all that we feel we ought to be ; the possession of a passion we

have to watch with unslumbering care ; pain that defies all doctors ; darkness of the spirit, against which there is no argument ; the sore of a bitter old sin ; a home in which there is no light of a true love ; a great and incurable disappointment ; or the death of our brightest and best—I say these may be the very conditions of the grace which is made “ perfect in our weakness.” Joyfulness has its own place ; gladness is the wine of life ; but the life-blood comes of the struggle, and the Saviour is the Man of Sorrows. Yet we can never be sure of this as we should be, until the great thing Paul had, to make the best of his thorn, is ours also, and that is, the uplifting and out-going of the heart to God. The out-going of the heart in faith, and prayer, and patience ; and the confidence, that while I rest in the sense of my Father’s wisdom and love, and do the best I can, things will be, if I were the sole being besides the Father in the universe, and he had no thought but to make everything come into harmony with my desire. It is always the old history over again we have to realize, before we can be entirely at rest. The cup is held to our lips, and we shrink back, and cry, “ Let this pass from me ; ” but then the soul says, “ The cup that *my* Father has given me, shall I not drink it ? ” and we say, “ Thy will be done,” and then there is quiet. The sun shines in the soul then, though it is black night outside ; and though we have to bear after that the kiss of the traitor, and the curse of the fiend, and the crown of thorns, all in the flesh together, and the cross and shame, we can bear all, and be all, while we rest in God, and look up to our great Forerunner, whose life, from the time he came forth to help us bear our burdens was one long pain, the thorn always hurting ; that so we might learn how the way to the loftiest life in heaven may lie through the roughest ways of earth.

“ ’Tis alone of His appointing  
That our feet on the thorns have trod ;  
Suffering, pain, renunciation,  
Only bring us nearer God.

“ Strength sublime may rise from weakness,  
Groans be turned to songs of praise ;  
Nor are life’s divinest labors  
Only told by songs of praise.”

## III.

## Every Man a Penny.

MATTHEW xx. 9: "He gave every man a penny."

I SUPPOSE we have all noticed the curious diversity of the seeds we sow in the spring. There are some that shoot out and grow up days before the others from the same paper, sown in the same bed, and that seemed exactly like the rest. It is so with a number of fruit trees in a young orchard. Each tree may get an equal care, and appear to have the same natural advantages, but one will spring out into an early fruitfulness, while another holds back, summer after summer, and perhaps, only when the husbandman begins to despair of its ever doing any good, it bears fruit.

It is so with boys. One lad will be bright and promising, the joy of his tutor, and the pride of his mother, right from the start; no one can tell exactly how he learned his letters; they seemed to come to him by instinct; he knew them when he saw them, or, as Plato would say, he recollected them. But another lad, on the same form, perhaps in the same family, is dull and backward; he has quite forgotten his first letters before he learned the last. But after a good while there is the dawn of a new day; then the backward boy has a whole sunrise to himself, and opens out into an equal manhood with the best of his brighter fellows.

It is so again with woman in the experiences and life of the heart. A shrinking, retiring, near-sighted woman waits and waits among the Yorkshire hills, saying, wistfully, to herself, "What shall I do?" It has been a long, sore trial to wait and watch as she has done. In her life-time she has known not a few of her own age who have long since solved that problem: some are wedded and happy in their homes; others have found

their true place as teachers, writers, or artists, and are crowned already with honor. This woman has had great sorrows, and sore losses, and her day is wearing on into the afternoon, still she has heard no voice bidding her go work in the vineyard. There is a letter written to Wordsworth while she stands there in the market-place waiting for the Master, that is, in my opinion, the most pathetic cry ever heard in our lifetime. "Sir," she says, "I earnestly entreat you to read and judge what I have sent you. From the day of my birth to this day I have lived in seclusion here among the hills, where I could neither know what I was nor what I could do. I have read, for the reason that I have eaten bread, because it was a real craving of nature, and have written on the same principle. But now I have arrived at an age when I must do something. The powers I possess must be used to a certain end; and as I do not know them myself, I must ask others what they are worth; there is no one here to tell me if they are worthy; and if they are worthless, there is no one to tell me that. I beseech you to help me." What she sends to Wordsworth then, is poor; she has written many volumes, all poor; has waited in the market-place and done no work; but at last, the Master, walking there, sees her wistful face turned towards him, and says, "Go into my vineyard." Then she bends over some small folded sheets of coarse paper until her face almost touches them, and in one book she storms the heart of England and America, and in the one hour that was left her she won her penny.

Another woman sits in her room in pleasant old Canterbury; her life has been lonely also, and she says to herself, "What shall I do?" She feels about and finds a pen, and it is not hard to see that there is a gift of God in the things she is doing long before she takes her great place; still it is only waiting. The Master comes, and the voice says, "Go work in my vineyard." Then, as she wiles us with the story of a woman, who was a Methodist and a preacher, and tells of the fortunes of those who were subject to her irresistible sway, she opens such hidden wells of tender truth and goodness, and dear homely humanity, as this world hardly believed could be treasured in

its heart in these latter days ; and now in other books following that, she has gone into the first rank of those that work for God in that corner of his vineyard, and has won her penny.

It is so again in the world of men. One man starts ahead, and distances all about him ; he will never have an equal, is the verdict of the world ; another, of the same age, stands where he was placed. At last something stirs him, and he starts too ; and while the first man never stops, the last comes up and runs abreast, or goes ahead. Charles Dickens sits in his chambers in London in the full fame of his *Pickwick Papers*. He is preparing a new book, to be brought out as that was, with illustrations. A man comes in, older than himself, but still a young man, says, " I have come, sir, to show you some drawings, and to get the place, if I can, of artist for your new story." The young author glances over the sketches, and then says, kindly, " They will not do." The man goes home, puts aside his pencil, partially, and takes a pen. He works for years after this, writing small books and pieces for magazines, but wins no notice, and is almost altogether unknown. One day, however, he goes to a bookseller in London with a new work, asks him to print it, and fails to persuade him. Another agrees to do it, with fear of the result ; but when the book is printed, the most popular writer in Britain has, from that day, a divided kingdom. And when this man died, suddenly, some years ago, tens of thousands, who had never seen his face, mourned for him as for a dear friend ; and now vast numbers, of the truest insight, will tell you that the poor artist, whose work was kindly refused, was the first man of his age in the department of letters, in which he once would have been glad and proud to be a servant of one of the servants of the Master who hires and pays us all.

It is so again in our practical common life. One man begins early, and is a notable man from the start. He goes on in his career, gathering honor and success ; the common heart is in his hand : when he speaks all listen ; when he writes all read. Another works hard on a frontier farm, or teaches a country school, or tries a flat-boat on the river, feeling dimly all the while that this is only waiting ; the time

has not come for him to enter the vineyard. But at last, as he stands watching and waiting, the voice says, "Go thou also," and presently those who have been the longest at work feel that he will win his penny. He had but one or two hours; he suffers no loss; he stands, at last, abreast of the very foremost of all.

This is true again of the spiritual life. The old prophet kept his flock, or followed his plough; and the old scholar drank at all the fountains of wisdom and inspiration. Josephus and Philo are masters in the highest attainments of their age; John and Peter are peasants and fishermen; Paschal and Jeremy Taylor seem as if they were born for the sacred robes, so early and so beautifully do they wear them: John Bunyan is, to all seeming, a born tinker, and George Fox, a born cobbler. So there is for them a long waiting and watching, and the cry, "What shall I do?" At last the voice says, "Go thou also." Then the grace and glory of the vines they have tended are a world's wonder, and their fruit a world's blessing.

This is true, finally, of our country. England and Germany begin in the early morning, and in the wild woods of Britain and Gaul, to earn their penny; and it is their lot for long centuries to toil, winning, as they can, this and that from the wilderness,—trial by jury, Magna Charta, free speech, free press, free pulpit,—and when many hours are past, and much hard work is done, a voice comes to a new nation, and tells of a new world, and says, "Go work there:" and when the old world looks up, the new is abreast of those nations that have borne the burden and heat of the day, and will have its penny. And in this new world itself, there are men living here in Chicago, who can remember very well when our great prairies lifted their faces wistfully to the sun, and cried, "No man hath hired us;" when our streets, now so full of life, sounded only to the voice of the mighty waters and the cry of the savage. Now the whole civilized world has to come and see what has been done. Not many years more will pass, we who live here believe, before this new worker will be abreast of the oldest, and will win her penny. For so God

comes and goes : selecting, calling, and settling all things according to the counsel of his own will. No man can stay his hand, or say, What doest thou? He sitteth in the heavens, and his kingdom is in all the earth. "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning, and at the third hour, and at the sixth, and at the ninth, and at the eleventh hour, and hired labourers for a penny a day. So when the even was come, the Lord said, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the first even unto the last. And they that came first, and they that came last, received every man his penny."

The parable is said to be meant for a lesson to the Jews at the moment when God was about to call the Gentiles into his vineyard also, and give them a place they had never filled before in working out his will. It is possible this meaning may lie within the parable in some remote way ; but I cannot believe that this is all the Saviour meant when he spoke to the Jews. The truth is, that then as now, and for ever, there are great numbers of men and women waiting in the market-place, in all sorts of ways, watching for the coming of the Master to set them to work ; to give them their true place in this life ; the place they know they can fill—men and women who have never found their calling, and yet have never ceased to watch for it, and wait with weary, hungry, patient eyes, and to say, "What shall I do?" We look at them, very likely, as we stand in our place doing our work, and despise them for what we call their shiftlessness ; when if we did but know the whole truth, we might wonder over them for their power to do what is harder than any hard work ever could be to such natures,—to wait for work, such as they ought to do, and hear no command to go. These were in the world then as they are now, and this Divine soul, which saw everything that had a sorrow in it, saw them ; and the heart that had a sympathy, sweet and abundant as a full honeycomb, took them all in, and then cried to the Father to know the truth about this ; and the truth came in this parable of those that work, and those that wait ; touch-



ing with its consolation the waiters, too; giving them their place in life and their promise; and bidding the worker pause in his hasty judgment of those who wait until he is quite sure that the waiter is not the most worthy of the two.

For this, I think, must be clear, first of all, as we study this mystery of waiters and workers, there can be no pleasure in waiting, in standing all the day idle, and looking wistfully, as the hours pass by, for some one to hire us, feeling the beat and tingle in nerve and brain that would gladly find some worthy task where nothing worthy comes. It is not the young man whose whole career is a constant success, or the young woman who finds her home or her place at once in life; not these the tender intention of the parable touches first and last: it is the young man who has to stand back, and notice painfully how he is distanced by his fortunate or clever companions who go right on: and the woman, whose hair, by and by, begins to show threads of silver while she is compelled to look wistfully and wofully into the silent heavens, into the deeps of our human life, everywhere watching for the coming of the Lord, who shall tell her what to do. Yet the day wears on, and she cries, as one hour strikes after another, "Woe is me! What shall I do?" It is the man who is dimly conscious of power and purpose somewhere within his soul, yet is compelled, year after year, to toil on twenty acres of hard-scrabble, or push a flat-boat, or teach a district school and board round, aware all the time that this is only waiting for the coming of the Lord,—yet to wait, and watch, and hear no voice. It is into these wistful eyes the compassionate Christ looks as he speaks his parable, and not into ours, who are working where we want to be, and feel sure of our wages.

And this, if I understand the parable, is the first consolation we touch in it, and good for all time. The ultimate reason why some have to stand and wait, who sorely want to work, rests not with us at all, but with the Lord who calls us when he will, and gives us our reward; not merely for working faithfully, but for waiting faithfully as well. It shows us that away down with this want of power to see and do, we are

to believe in the will of God concerning us. So that what we see in such lives as I have touched, for example, we must see in the life of every worthy man and woman who has to wait and watch; who tries and fails, and has to stand back, God knows why, we say in our pride, and they in their patience. We are both right; God does know why; and that is the most intimate reason. He has determined it shall be so, and his purpose may be answered in that one life, and in the whole commonwealth of the world. As we seem to see the things through a glass darkly, when we notice how he kept North America waiting when China was called, and then kept the West waiting when the East was called; waiters and workers,—this has always been the Divine order. Lands, nations, providences, discoveries, the whole world, outside the personal life of the man and woman, are full of my parable.

So, then, when I see a young man slow and backward, and in a poor place, whose soul I know would expand in the sunshine of prosperity and fill a better place: or a woman, waiting with her unfulfilled life in her heart, willing to give it in any high, pure fashion to the Lord, if he will but come and take it; or a preacher, with a mighty power to preach somewhere in his nature, if he could only find the clew to it; or a man who has waited through his life time for the Lord to show him the true church, the place where he can feel that the religious heart of him is at rest;—if in these things or in any of them, I feel I have found my place, and am doing my work, I must feel very tenderly, and judge very generously, all the waiters in all these ways; must call up this picture of the faces so wistful in the old market-place, watching for the coming of the Lord: "Who has made me to differ, who has called me at the first hour, why do I succeed where others fail?" It is the gift of God; it is not of works, lest any man should boast. It is the difference between the seed the husbandman, for his own good reason, will leave dark and still in the granary, and the seed he sows which can spring at once to the sun and the sweet airs of the summer. It is the difference in the home, in our conduct towards our children, when we know it is best to let one go forward in the school and keep another

back ; yet both decisions come out of our heart's best love, and are made through what we know, but the children do not know, of their present and future. So this working and waiting lies in the will of God, and God is my Father, and this is the predestination of My father's love.

There is another thing in this parable we must not miss ; I have touched it already, but not all it needs : it is the eager wistfulness and readineas in those faces of the waiters ; the sure sign that when they are called, they will be ready to go. If they had been indifferent or asleep, the Master might have passed them by ; if they had not been ready also in the sense of knowing what to do, they would have had only disgrace and no penny. The two great sources of failure, when the fault lies at all in ourselves, are to be found first, in not keeping our heart and life awake to the call of God, and, second, in not knowing how to take hold when we are called. Every man and woman who has achieved a real success in any way whatever, from the forging of a horse-shoe to the saving of a soul, succeeded through being ready when the call came. You believe that a lucky hit, as we call it, made them what they are. I tell you, Nay ; whatever has come out of the head, and heart, and hand of any man or woman, first went into it in some quick, genuine, human fashion. They builded better than they knew, but they knew they builded : John Bunyan was the pilgrim who made the Progress ; George Fox quaked and trembled, it was Wesley's methods that made the Method-ist : and before the slaves could be free, Garrison must be bound with them. No man or woman ever won the penny by accident. If you will be sure that the longing you feel for something better is not to end in disgrace when your call comes, you must now be gathering the ideas and aptitudes that will insure the place ; keep your whole life open and ready ; then when the Master comes and says, "That is the place you are to fill, and the work you are to do," you shall find that to you, as fully as to those that were called before you, comes the full reward.

There is one thing more ; it has lurked in some of your hearts and minds all the time I have been talking. You say

you can tell me of men and women who never could do what they longed to do, but only had it in them to do it, and could never get it out; men and women as noble as those I have mentioned for illustration, and as good, but lonely and unknown to the last, and they died hearing no call from the Master, but only waiting till the sun set and they went home. Yes, and I myself have known such men and women, whose lot, from the place where I stood looking at it, seemed as sad as a tragedy; and yet this was the wonder of it, that somehow they themselves were generally among the most cheerful and happy people at last under the great canopy of heaven. For one thing they generally do get a poor little show of some sort before they get through, and it does them more good than we can tell. It does not take much coin to come to a penny, but a penny to them has a wonderful worth; they feel somehow, at last, as a rule, with very few exceptions, that, taken altogether, their lines have fallen in pleasant places. And then standing there, watching and waiting, there have come to them a patience and power that seldom come to the prosperous and happy—to those that have everything they want.

I think the most heart-whole man I ever knew, was a man who had waited and watched, breaking stones through all weathers on the cold shoulder of a Yorkshire hill, and he could hardly see the stones he had to break he was so sand blind. His wife was dead and all his children; his hut was open to the sky, and to the steel-cold stars in winter; but when once one said to comfort him, "Brother, you will soon be in heaven!" he cried out in his rapture, "I have been there this ten years!" And so when at last the angel came to take him, he was not unclothed, but clothed upon; mortality was swallowed up of life.

I treasure a small drawing by Millais. It is the figure of a woman bound fast to a pillar far within tide mark. The sea is curling its tides about her feet; a ship is passing in full sail, but not heeding her or her doom; birds of prey are hovering about her, but she heeds not the birds, or the ship, or the sea; her eyes look right on, and her feet stand firm, and you see that she is looking directly into heaven, and telling her soul how the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared

with the glory that shall be revealed ; and under the picture is this legend, copied from the stone set up to her memory in an old Scottish kirkyard :—

“ Murdered for owning Christ supreme,  
Head of His Church, and no more crime.  
But for not owning prelacy,  
And not abjuring presbytery,  
Within the sea, tied to a stake,  
She suffered for Christ Jesus’ sake.”

I treasure it, because when I look at it, it seems a type of a great host of women who watch and wait, tied fast to their fate, while the tide creeps up about them, but who rise as the waves rise, and on the crest of the last and loftiest are borne into the quiet haven, and hear the “ Well-done ! ”

#### IV.

### The Two Harvests.

ROMANS vii. 4 : “ Fruit unto God.”

It has come to me, now that the last fruits of the year are being gathered, to say something to you of the lesson that lies within our harvest, touching the harvest of life. And I want to speak of it in the light of the suggestion that rises naturally out of my text, and try if I can, to find what is fruit unto God. What is fruit to us, is a question not very hard to answer ; but fruit to God, I propose to show, is unspeakably more, look at it as we will, than what is fruit to us.

And in doing this, I shall speak to you,—

I. Of the vastness of his harvest compared with ours.

II. Of its variety, and

III. Of its ripening.

First, then, we have to notice the difference every harvest-time brings home to us between our conception and that of the Divine Providence, of what is really good fruit in the measure of it. It is at once quite evident, when we begin to look into it, that the gift of God in the harvest he ripens is so great, it

can only be held in his own measure. We see it is not merely this granary of ours that is full ; there is another granary besides this, in which a harvest is stored of seed for sowing, and bread for eating, to which this of ours is a mere handful, and all this is as good in its way, as the fruit and corn on which we have come to set such store. There are seeds so small that the human eye cannot see them, and fruits of the wilderness so manifold, as to far exceed, as yet, our power to find them out ; they are scattered through all the zones of the world, from the Iceland moss in the Arctic circle to the palm-tree under the line. The whole world outside our little store-house is one great granary, "a house not made with hands," in which things are laid up that are good, in one way or another, for all the families in the many mansions of the Maker and Provider, from whose full hand we are all fed. Our good fruit in this light is one thing, his good fruit another ; and so, as the heavens are higher than the earth, his thought of what is good must be higher than our own.

Whatever we may think of the thorns and thistles that came up outside Eden to curse the land, what he said was good, when he made the earth bring forth grass, and the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-trees yielding fruit after their kind, is good still ; there has been no debasement of this Divine husbandry ; no empty granary of God ; no failure of the field. He tills for the multitude that cry to him for bread. I look up, at the end of the harvest that he has gathered, and the wonder and joy of it seem to me unspeakable. He crowns the year with his goodness to every living thing.

This is true again, when we turn from the vastness of this treasure to its variety. We get some sense of this from what we agree to call good fruit. We see how the corn differs from the apple, and the grape from the chesnut ; how the plum can never be like the melon, or the walnut as the blackberry ; and in this variety there is a blessing that could never be found, if the best of all the things God has given us could have been selected for our sole use, and poured out upon us from his hand in the full measure of our wishes.

So I cannot find in my heart to condemn Israel for crying

out against the manna, good as it seems to have been, and full of nonrishment, when they found that was all they had ; and then that they should look back longingly to Egypt, by and by, and hanker after the cucumbers and melons, the variety of the good fruit they had left in the old country ; and then when quails came, that they should devour them with such eagerness as to bring on a plague.

I do not find that with the heavenly manna there was any alteration in the human appetite : that remained as it always had been ; it remained, therefore, to torment them ; it was not in their human nature to be content with angels' food, so long as they were still in the flesh. And I have no idea of what was grown in Eden ; but I know that if Eden did not grow such a variety in its harvests as this that now blesses all civilized men, it was not so good a place to live in, in some respects, as this city, and would not be so likely to satisfy the whole demand of our life. Let this be as it may, the variety that we ourselves take note of, is as divine as the abundance. Yet it is but a fragment of the whole variety that is harvested in the garner of God. We are constantly coming into possession of some new fruit or seed that brings a new blessing ; but beyond that, other races have their blessings, differing from ours, specially adapted to their sustenance and joy. And then there is a vast store of things that ripen every harvest, we know very little about, or take to be worthless, but in their own place and for their own purpose they are all good fruits. The variety in the harvest that God reaps is as wonderful as the vastness.

So it is again when we turn from the harvest to the harvest-time. We naturally think of what is gathered now, and laid up for the bleak days that are coming. But the truth is, ever since the snow-drop came up through the snow, and blessed us in the wild, spring weather, there has been a perpetual ingathering of ripe things. The spring blossoms ripened when our eyes had been gladdened, and our hearts had fed on their beauty and sweetness, and when their time came they passed away ; they are harvested in the granaries of life ; the corruptible has put on incorruption, and the mortal, immortality ; ~~these things~~ *are not in our memory merely, but in our being.*

The first fruits of summer came : it was ordained of Heaven that they should not wait for the later harvest ; they must ripen in June, or not at all ; and so they ripened and were gathered, and reckoned in the harvest of the year. There were other fruits that came to their perfection in the strong sun of August. They must be gathered when they were ripe : they could not wait for the early frosts ; and they are a part of the harvest too, just as truly as the grapes and corn. The completeness of harvest, then, is in the great span of it ; and we only understand the whole truth of what is fruit unto God, when we understand and feel how good it is for our life to take in this long ripening, together with the vastness and variety. No human eye may ever see myriads of blessings we must count in the harvest of God, and yet the blue-bell, waving in the wilderness, shall be a sky of azure fretted with gold for a host of God's creatures living under its vast dome and rejoicing in the completeness of its blessing.

This, then, is the truth about the harvest we are completing. We have one measure for it ; He who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds has another. We gather a few varieties ; he bids nature and his angels gather all. We think of this as the harvest-time : harvest began when we felt the breath of the first snow-drop, and blessed it for heralding the glory of the year ; and this is the truth that fills the soul fullest of the goodness of God. The more completely we can grasp the vastness, the variety, and the long ripening of the harvest, the more deeply we can feel the presence of his providence and grace.

I said the harvest of the year leads us on to the harvest of life ; the vastness, and variety, and difference in the ripening of humanity, and the difference between our estimate of it and the estimate of Heaven. In my boyhood, when I listened to sermons, and through some years of the time I preached them, my idea, of the harvest of Humanity, and what is good fruit to God, was very simple. A long, narrow strip in the great wilderness of the world bore good fruit, all the rest was left to grow things whose end is to rot, or to be burned. That was the way I was taught to believe in the harvest of Humanity,—



the good fruit that the angels gathered ; and God, forgive me, it was the way I tried to teach others. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, and so down to Abraham and Lot, and with a patch somewhere on one side for Melchisedec ; then by Joseph and Moses, and the Judges to David, and by the Prophets down to Christ ; then from Christ, the narrow belt of the True Church in and out of the Church of Rome to the Reformation, and then though the Puritans, down to this age. That was the way we got at the harvest of Humanity ; of what was especially worth garnering of all that grew in the wilderness of the world, for about six thousand years, as near as we could tell by Bishop Lowth's chronology.

It is by no means the exclusive task of liberal Christianity now to deny this wretched, narrow dogma ; the best preachers of every faith in Christendom are proclaiming the truth, our preachers were among the first to proclaim from the pulpit, that fruit, unto God is grown and gathered in every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue. That Assyria, and Egypt, and Greece, and Rome, and Arabia, and Ethiopia, and Scandinavia, and old Gaul, bore their harvests as certainly as the Hebrew and Christian lands. That what the church and the preacher insisted on as the true harvest exclusively, is only the harvest of a few varieties, of which the noblest Christian fruit is no doubt the best of all, but that finds its full perfection too in what it draws from all the rest.

This is the truth of the vastness, and variety, and long ripening of the harvest of God in the whole human family. The field is the world ; no narrow ribbon, but all the zones, from the equator to the poles. It is the grand verity that Paul caught out of heaven as he stood on Mars Hill, and cried, God made the world, and *all* things therein. He giveth to *all* life, and breath, and all things. He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and he is not far from every one of us—the children of Cain as well as of Seth, of Ishmael as well as Isaac, by the Iliads as surely as the Psalms, by Athens as by Jerusalem, by Pagan as by Christian Rome, and in Saracen as in Christian Spain. Everywhere the harvest of humanity has ripened through its

infinite variety, and from the spring-time of the world to the autumn.

We are gradually coming to the conviction again, that this is the truth about the divine ingathering to-day—what is fruit unto God, good men in all churches and out of them are saying, cannot be this small handful alone in the Christian garner. That is no doubt the best wherever it comes to its full perfection, but there is a divine reaping where the Christian seed was never sown. This old idea of an exclusive goodness and acceptance among Christians, is very much like what we see sometimes at our State fairs. Men come there who have set their hearts on some one thing, and given their life to its development. The consequence is, very naturally, that they cannot weigh the worth of quantities of good fruits and seeds which differ from theirs, or even from their special variety of the same thing, and have no faculty at all for estimating the good that is not good enough to be *shown*, but that lies in an infinite wealth in the world outside the Fair ground.

We have far too much of this in our churches still. We devote ourselves to the cultivation of our variety, and train our vision away, through our devotion, from seeing, as we should, what worth there is in the varieties to which we have given no attention. If we allow these to be good again, but not so good as ours, we think little of the great harvest of good outside this wider circle. But there it is, filling the world with blessing. And so it is with the whole harvest of Humanity to-day. There is not a nation or a people any where that is not, according to its variety, bringing forth fruit to God—something good answering to its condition, as truly as the harvests answer to the zones of the world. It is not our sort; perhaps we cannot see what use there is in it; it is not our business. What we have to do is to make the best of the corner of the vineyard the Master has given us, and then to believe that he will see to the rest, and will not let it run to waste. In China and India, as well as in America, the Lord of the harvest holds his own; for the field is the world, and the reapers are the angels; and in vastness, in variety, and in

the span of the harvest, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

This brings me to say again, that the same thing that comes home to us about the life that is close to ours. What I have said about Christian ideas of the multitudes of heathens all the world over, I must insist on in connection with those in our own land, who are not Christians, and never will be. I can no more believe that the mere handful of our countrymen who are gathered into churches are all that are going to be gathered into heaven, than that the barns and cellars of the country hold all the good that has ripened this fall. I am the last man, I trust, to say a word that shall seem to make the Christian faith and the Christian church anything else but what it is. What I will say is this, that the religious life is by no means confined to the Christian faith and churches. There is a very great deal we never think of calling religion, that is still fruit unto God, and garnered by Him in the harvest. The fruits of the Spirit, are love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, patience, goodness. I affirm, that if these fruits are found in any form, they are the fruits of the Spirit, whether you show your patience as a woman nursing a fretful child, or as a man attending to the vexing detail of a business, or as a physician following the dark mazes of sickness, or as a mechanic fitting the joints and valves of a locomotive; being honest and true besides, you bring forth fruit unto God.

I went into a picture-store one day, and met a lady who said, "Come and look at a picture." I suppose you have most of you seen it. There are two figures in it; one is a soldier—one of our own—wounded and sick, worn and weary, with a white face, and great, out-looking eyes, that seem as if they were watching for the chariot of heaven. The other is a Sister of Mercy, with a book in her hand, reading. She has one of those sweet, clear faces we all remember, in which no trace of human passion glances itself any more, but only the quietness and assurance of a heart at rest.

"What do you think of it?" my friend said. I expressed my sense of its beauty: but then I had to tell her how sure I was that it was not the Sister, with her prayer-book, that stood

for the pure, religious devotion of that scene; the poor fellow there, almost dead, was, to me, the most religious of the two. I could not look behind him, as I could behind the woman, through long years of fasting, and prayer, and aspiration. That might be there, or might not; the probabilities were against it; but what was there that I could see, was a love that could make the man leap out of his home to the front; a joy that he could make his breast a barrier for the mother-land; peace in duty well done; long suffering in the doing, down to that moment; and gentleness, and patience, and goodness, ripening, evidently, as he lay there with a far-away look in his eyes, that saw then, only home and heaven.

And so it is with this whole harvest of life; it is infinitely vaster, as the harvest of the world is, than our estimate; and God is here to see to every grain of it, as Nature sees to every grain that lies in her lap from April to October.

“ God, the Creator, does not sit aloof,  
As in a picture painted on a roof,  
Occasionally looking down from thence,—  
He is all presence and all providence.”

So it is again with the truth of variety. Men differ in their ways and in their nature as widely as the chesnut and cherry, or the walnut and the peach, and yet they may all be good men. Here, again, we set up our idea of what is good fruit in the face of heaven, and then find it hard to make out that there is much good in the world. We want men and women to be good according to the way we define goodness, and cannot believe in them if they cannot conform to our standard. A man may be as good at the heart of him as a man can be; but if he be sharp or hard on the surface, we cannot quite believe in such goodness as that; we never think that such a man is a chesnut or a walnut in the harvest of the year, as good in his own way as any. Others, again, are all sweetness until you get at their heart, and then you find a tang of bitterness and hardness you never expected. You wonder whether they can be really good men. You might as well wonder whether there can be a good plum, or peach, or cherry. Some, again, are wrapped up in

husks, that are dry, withered, and dead ; but down within the husk is the grain, and that is good, and you know it ; but you sorrow that the husk should be there, and never think it has to be there for a nature like that, or there would be no grain, and that by and by all this will be stripped away and done with.

The variety in the fruit of life is as divine as the abundance. Peter had a forbidding outside, with a heart as tender as ever beat ; and John's heart, when you come close to him, was anything but tender : but they were both saints for all that. Erasmus was, perhaps, the most fascinating man of his day ; Luther, to look at, one of the least. The good of Erasmus was more on the outside, of Luther, more within. They are both to be counted among the noblest children of God. Goldsmith was a pulp of a rare sweetness almost down at the core ; Johnson had a goodness unspeakably different, but quite as good, in one of the knottiest and hardest shells to look at that was ever seen. Stephen Girard was a by-word for what was hard and keen ; but once when the yellow fever raged in Philadelphia he was the first man in the town in his fearless devotion and sweet self-sacrifice for the sick and dying. We have one idea of goodness, Heaven has another.

In all sorts of husks and shells, hard, sharp, withered, and dead, God sees a goodness we are always missing, and counts and treasures it in the granary of heaven. We think of him too much as one walking through the world, looking only for the best, and rejecting, with aversion, what is not the best. I tell you when he goes forth with his reapers to gather his harvest, he looks as lovingly now as once he looked through the eyes of Christ, his Son, for all the good there is everywhere. There may be only a single grain in October where he put in a grain in March : he bids his angels gather that as carefully as if it were a hundred fold.

Then of the long ripening. The harvest we would have, if we had our way, would all be gathered in October. Our idea of Humanity is, that it should come to its end like corn fully ripe, or the apples that are only perfected in the frost, and we almost lay it up as a grudge against Heaven that we cannot have it so. But ever since the world was, Humanity has had

its long ripening. Delicate blossoms have bloomed in the spring that could never live to summer. Little children, the snowdrops of the year, young men and maidens, the early summer fruit, strong men in their prime, perfected in August,—so the harvest of Humanity has grown and been gathered from first to last. It is hard to see, through our tears, that this can be the divine way with us, and the most blessed way Heaven could contrive for our blessing. But with little children in heaven, that passed away like the snowdrops, and youth that ripened in its June, and true friends and kinsfolk that were perfected in their August, and left me to wait for the early or the latter autumn, or the winter, I cling to the conviction that the long ripening was the divinest. I would have kept them all; my heart aches for them with an intolerable longing; sometimes I wonder how it can be that God will be justified when he speaks to me of his perfect providence and infinite love in taking these from me. He will not argue. He will only ask what I think my life would have been had they never come to bless me in their seasons, and then to be taken away. It will be all right when it comes to that.

This finally rounds itself with a word of admonition. First, that I shall not be content with my own poor limited vision of the harvest of Humanity. When I make my sense of the fullness, and variety, and ripening of men the standard with which to measure the divine sense of it, it is as if I made my sense of what is gathered here in October tell the whole story of the year all over the world. Good fruit to God surpasses all conception that I can form either of its measure or of its variety. Second, this must not for one instant leave me careless about growing to be my best, or of helping others to grow. It must only be an inspiration and incitement to me, as I feel there is so much more to encourage me than there would be if I believed that the most of what can be grown is only good to burn. It is good to garner under all its varieties. I shall not despair of anything. If only a little seed of good ripens, that little seed will never be lost. One of the worst women we ever had, says the matron of one of the great English prisons, was caught one day weeping over a daisy. Well, I think God's angels saw that

keep the five. If I say church and sacrament are not essential, I am considered still more out of the true path. But if I then go on to say the Sabbath is not essential,—that a man may be saved in other ways than by faith in the personal and risen Christ, and that the Bible must be servant to the soul, not the soul to the Bible,—then Christian men tell me I cannot walk with God at all, and that my end will be a leap in the dark after a life in the dark, with dark faces all about me.

But I brush the dust away from this most honorable name, and ask what Enoch had of all this that is made so essential to me ; and I find that he had no Bible, no knowledge of this personal Christ, no church, no Sabbath, and no sacraments ; which brings me, by a very short and simple way, to this great truth ; that all these things,—very good, never to be undervalued by any sound-hearted man,—are not, after all, essential to the perfect life, or else Enoch had not been able to attain to this perfection before they were heard of ; and that under these outward and visible signs there must be, therefore, some inward and spiritual grace, possessing which at any time, in any land, a man possesses all things—can walk with God as Enoch did, and find at last that mortality is swallowed up in life.

What crumb of proof is needed to show that Enoch was so destitute, can, of course, only be mentioned in the briefest way. That he had no Bible is clear, from the fact that if Moses wrote the first five books of it, Enoch himself had then been translated some two thousand years.

“After the most careful study of this question, we cannot infer that more than the simple weekly division of time was known before Moses,” says the writer of the article “Sabbath,” in Smith’s great “New Bible Dictionary.”

The claim that the obscure oracle,—that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head,—must have been a revelation of the Redeemer, it is entirely impossible to believe. That Enoch could have belonged to a church, except as the church belonged to Enoch, when,

“Kneeling down to heaven’s eternal King,  
The saint, the father, and the husband prays,”

it is equally impossible to infer ; while the time was yet very far distant when men should build up a stupendous ecclesiastical pretension, from the longing of the most loving heart that ever beat on this earth, to be remembered by friend and follower, even in the simple every-day usage of eating bread and drinking wine, to be blended as intimately with the spirit as these elements were with the materialism of their life. And I feel ready to apologize for offering even this brief hint of the proof, that not one of those things now considered so essential had then been heard of, until I remember how hard it was for me to realize once what is now so simple and self-evident ; and how easy it is to slide into a semi-sense, that what is now made of such ponderous importance, was always so ; and that we are doing some new thing when we establish a church like this, in which we declare much that others deem essential and supreme, to be but symbolic and subordinate, while, indeed, we are but backing up to the most absolute conservatism ; bringing old things into the new time, as if we should sow, and reap from the Illinois prairie, wheat grains buried for uncounted centuries in some rock-tomb by the field.

I propose to discuss briefly this destitution of Enoch then ; this poverty, by which he came so directly into the possession of the kingdom of heaven ; to touch here and there these essentials of our times, and see how the man might have been richer or poorer for their presence in his life, and so, by consequence, see what they can be, and what they cannot be, to us.

First of all, Enoch had no Bible ; and yet, sad as it seems to be without a Bible, it would depend very greatly on the man whether this destitution would be a blight or a blessing. I love the Bible supremely. In all the world I have found no book to set beside it. Other books I love well. Milton, Taylor, Carlyle, Tennyson, Emerson, Spencer, and many a noble name beside in this great brotherhood are so dear to me, that there are few sacrifices I could not gladly make rather than lose their companionship. But when I am in any great strait—when I want to find words other than my own to rebuke some



crying sin or to stay some desperate sinner, to whisper to the soul at the parting of the worlds, or to read, as I sit with them that weep beside their dust, words that I know will go to the right place as surely as corn dropped into good soil on a gleaming May day,—then I put aside all books but one—the book out of which my mother read to me, and over which she sang to me, as far back as I can remember; and when I take this book, it is like those springs that never give out in the driest weather, and never freeze in the hardest, because they reach so directly into the great, warm fountains under the surface. It never fails.

But have we not all noticed the curious fact, that men go to the Bible for what they want to find, rather than what they ought to find? that those who profess the most absolute submission to its authority, offer generally the finest possible illustration of the supremacy of the soul over the Bible in the way they contrive to make it serve their turn? and that it is by no means impossible to find duplicates of the good Scotchwoman's minister, of whom she said, "If there is a cross text in the Bible, he is sure to find it, and take it for a sermon."

The truth is, the Bible is like a great pasture, into which you turn all manner of feeders. The horse takes what he wants, so does the cow; the sheep is true to its instinct, so is the goat; and then, last of all, the ass rolls the thistle, like a sweet morsel, under his tongue. So, when a man with a large, sweet nature, comes to the Bible, he crops, by a sure instinct, all the large, sweet passages. The hopeful man finds the hopeful things: the sad man the sorrowful things; the hard man, the hard things; and every man the things that satisfy his craving, though they may in no way make for his peace. If, then, Enoch was a right-hearted man, the Bible would have been a wonderful blessing to his life. It would have whispered consolation in his trouble; it would have rebuked him with a sad sternness for his sin; it would have refreshed him many a time in his weariness; it would have helped him to be a man. But if he had been hard, narrow, bitter, and bigoted, it might have confirmed him in all that is most ugly and **unlovable** in a man otherwise intending to do right, and been

compelled by him, as it has been by so many, into antagonism to the purest and best things. Make the Bible Minister to such a spirit as this ; find in it merely hard, bitter things, to confirm a hard bitter tone towards all but those that happen to belong to your own particular Bethel ; find nothing to make you tender and kind to the good men who may happen to be more radical or conservative than yourselves in their interpretation of the essentials of the truth and life, then you are infinitely poorer with a Bible than Enoch was without one.

Because we cannot afford to forget, that this man, walking with God, was by no means so destitute as he seems ; but being a man whose soul was open to the heavens, out of which whatever is best in our Bible has come, he had in some way a Bible after all,—an Old and New Testament that was never permitted to grow dusty, that was not brought merely for good manners where the minister happened to be staying over night, but a Bible fresh and perennial, beyond what most of us that set such store by our Bible can imagine. It is surely no light matter in the discussion of this question, to remember that this perfect life was all done when the world was young ; that this man lived while men yet believed angels descended with sweet silence on the mountains ; when the things which were afterwards put into the book of Job and the older Psalms were glistening in the dew of the sun newly risen on the race ; when the pure wonder and trust of childhood had not gone out of men ; when, believing that the morning stars sang together, all the sons of God shouted for joy.

What Enoch had then, came to him directly. If, in any rude runic or hieroglyphic way, he had possession of the story of the struggles of his race to work out their own salvation, he read his Cotton Mather and Winthrop, his Bancroft and Hildreth, and Frank Moore, in a near, sacred, very present sense of the presence of God in the struggle, that we do not now understand, and that we never can understand, until we dare believe that, when we want to read in our church or family some great lesson from history, these annals of our own are so significant that we can take a chapter from any one of them, and read it with a reverence as deep and all-pervading as that we feel when we

read in the books of Moses, or in the chronicles of the judges and kings.

When Enoch lived, if his melons were large, and sweet, and plentiful, he thanked God for good melons. We say, I was very particular about seed and soil. If his trees flourished exceedingly, they hinted some blessed thing about God's good providence to a tree. I remember that I sent for the plants all the way to Rochester. When Enoch lived, and flowers carpeted dale and upland on the Euphrates, he thought as the poet sang, how

“Not worlds on worlds in phalanx deep,  
 Need we to prove that God is here;  
 The daisy, fresh from Nature's sleep,  
 Tells of his hand in lines as clear.  
 For who but he who arched the skies,  
 And poured the day-spring's living flood,  
 Wonders alike in all he tries,  
 Could raise the daisy's purple bud,  
 Mould its green cup, its wiry stem,  
 Its fringed border nicely spin,  
 And cut the gold embossed gem,  
 That, set in silver, gleams within,  
 And fling it unrestrained and free  
 O'er hill, and dale, and desert sod,  
 That man, where'er he walks, may see  
 In all his footsteps there's a God.”

Our children come to us with flowers, but they treat us to scientific dissections of them, and laugh at the dear old names we give them. We are very proud, of course, as becomes the fathers of little persons so learned, and say to ourselves, “This is very wonderful!” But then, we cannot but wonder whether they do see quite so much in the wild rose or the bluebell as I did when I strayed to seek them by bank and hedge-row, before I had heard of such things as Latin and botany, or dreamed that somewhere in the pre-existed heavens were voices training to call me father. Enoch lived when what sense of sin and retribution lay in the soul touched it to the very quick; when dyspepsia and gout were not to be explained away by a pleasant doctor, but meant over-feeding and under-work; when the words we sing out of David's psalms, how “the heavens declare the glory of

God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork," were singing themselves in Enoch's heart ; when heaven and earth, and life, and the life to come, lay near and next to the soul of the man that walked with God ; when every babe born into his house was a chapter in a New Testament, teaching some new wonder of the truth and life ; and what it is to be a child of God, was made all clear to him in his own children.

Now, this Bible was open to Enoch, as it is open to every man who will look into it. And when we think of this, we cannot wonder that he should do so well before teachers of the truth had begun to confound the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, with one of its most blessed results ; to make this mighty aid to the perfect life and upspringing end, one of its most essential conditions ; "to soil the book in struggles for the binding ;" to practically deny that in all ages, they that fear God and work righteousness are accepted of him, or that the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being set forth by the things that are made. A voice that always commands attention, has hinted that the highest faith of this soul is to centre finally in the Bible or in Mathematics. It is possible ; and yet we may remember to-night the high faith of this soul, while Bible and probably Mathematics too were yet invisible, and then be as sure as we are sure God is very God and our Father, that if ever Mathematics shall come to assume so great a place as to divide the kingdom with this great book, and win souls to trust in them as the very truth, then will they somehow become the very life too, and the properties and proportions of number be so filled with a divine beauty, so clothed in robes of light, that men will grow brave and strong, and weep and rejoice as they study them ; will be martyrs and confessors for their truth and life, as surely as ever men were martyrs and confessors for the truth and life in the Prophecies and Gospels.

The time which I have given to a special consideration of this one thing, will release me from the discussion of those other so-called essentials with any like elaboration. I cannot well tell you what a blessed light has come into my life from the

face of Jesus Christ since the old times, when, one by one, the dark shadows that had always fallen between his life and mine began to lift. And I will give place to no man again in true love to a true church ; to some common home where men and women meet who are drawn together by a mutual love ; where they can no more help meeting than our children can help rushing home from school ; a sort of divine brotherhood, in which every man feels some sorrow when trouble falls to any, and a common interest in each great joy ; a church so true, that if you dishonor one, you dishonor every one, and that any man may be sure his good name is safe while one is within ear-shot who worships in that place ; a church where great reservoirs of power are filled full and held ready to be poured out whenever the true occasion comes to open the flood-gates for God or man, and yet where there is such a continual overflow, that the store is kept sweet by its own generous flowing ; a church where whatsoever things are true are welcome, and where there is such a constant deepening of spiritual life manifested in the devout utterances of all in prayers and praises, that every man is lifted nearer heaven at his need than he could hope to be by solitary meditation.

And the Sabbath I love. It may be a superstition ; but the more I study the question of seven-sameness, the more I am drawn to the Sabbath as a prime necessity of life, apart from its special uses for worship, and ready to admit that, if it did not take so great a place in the master book of the master races on the globe, we should still grope our way somehow to the conclusion of a great physiologist, that "while the night's rest seems to equalize the circulation, still it does not restore the perfect balance to the life." Hence it will come to pass, that while the man who neglects to take a seventh day, at least, for rest, may be borne along by the vigor of his mind to continual exertion, yet in the long run he will break down sooner and more suddenly than the man who is determined to put aside at least one seventh of his working life for rest and recreation. But not for this alone will the Christian minister stand by the Sabbath, but because he knows that the needs of the soul are as imperative as those of the body, the hunger of the inner life as

sores as that of the outer; and that no man can live by bread alone.

There is no sight in this world so touching to me, as the sight of this church on a Sunday. I look down the aisles, and there see the lawyer, who has been wrangling in the courts; the merchant, who has been watching the fluctuations of the market; the mechanic, every day driven by clanging hammer and grinding wheel; the maiden, weary with the incessant task-work of the school; and the mother, nearly worn out by the heavy cares of the home. But here they all gather; and as their faces turn to me, I see no longer the busy man and woman, but the soul returning to its rest; coming to God, if haply it may feel after him, and find him; endeavoring to shift the burden, so that the pinch will not be quite so much on the one place; striving to find how they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; and, last of all, while I believe that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has managed to drift to the farthest possible point from its primitive intention; to become so thin and shadowy in its material elements, that I almost wish these could be dispensed with, as they are so nearly; there is that at the heart of it, when I meet with the few who feel that it is to them a great consolation, that makes me almost forget I am eating a crumb of bread and sipping a drop of wine, I can enter so nearly with them into that dear Presence, and so realize how wonderful was this sacrifice, made in his perfect prime, by one who shrank from death in that way, as possibly humanity never shrank before, yet would make no hair's breadth of compromise to save his life, though when the horror of great darkness fell, he felt that even God had forsaken him.

But I should fall back on Enoch, and insist on using his Bible, and no other, if I were compelled to choose between that and the thorns and thistles so many well-meaning men insist on my accepting, whether I will or not, and assimilating into my nature as the bread of life; as I would shut the book, and never open it again, rather than be compelled to acquiesce in the one hideous monstrosity of an eternal hell fire—so, if it were possible for me to be beaten out of my belief in this dear Christ, as he now looks at me out of heaven; to see in

him mainly a sacrifice to slake the wrath of an angry God; or a being holding a relation to God that contradicts every possibility of nature or numbers; or even were I required to bind myself over to believe what contradicted the best insight of my own soul concerning his life, death, and resurrection, whether this chorded most nearly with this or that side of liberal Christianity; or if I were compelled to join a church in which men and women who compose it are as much isolated from a common Christian fellowship as if the cord that should bind them was electricity, and they were sitting in pews of glass, where not my own honest, natural bent was respected, and not the discharge of daily duties, in a simple, loving spirit, was counted religion, but I was compelled to do things against my nature, not daring to refuse, in peril of my soul; or if I were compelled to keep a Sabbath again, so that I durst not say to any man who has been so chained to his desk all the week that he has never taken a full breath, "My friend, I am set to watch for your soul; and as a minister of the Gospel of that Christ, who said the first consideration is not the Sabbath, but the man, I tell you that this is not the true worship for you to come here, cramping yourself every Sunday over your Bible and hymn-book; the true worship, the Sabbath-keeping most sacred, will be to intersperse with your Sundays at church, Sundays when you will start out on a long-stretching walk into the country, or go lie down, through a summer day, on your back at the root of a tree, and look up into the great, quiet heavens; when you will do something that will expand your natural life, and sweeten and reform it; that will take the snarl out of your brain, instead of letting me put another into it through my sermon:" if I were compelled again to accept the sacrament as a sort of occult charm, instead of a sacred remembrance; to invest it with frightful possibilities of damnation if I do not succeed, before I take it, of divesting myself of everything that is most bright, cheerful, and human—then, rather than be bound so to Bible, Intercessor, Church, Sabbath, or Sacrament, I would go back and range with good ~~me~~, self-contained, subject to God alone, as He

speaks to me through nature and the soul. Then, if any man troubled me with impertinences about the soundness of my faith, and its power to bear me through life and death—if no deeper argument were worth my while, I would refer him to this primitive instance out of his own prime authority, how one, doing by one necessity what I am doing by another, won this supreme glory and blessing,—that he walked with God, and was translated, so that he should not see death.

All this I say, finally, not because I would take one atom of power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing from these aids to religion, but because I would make them everything they can be, as ministering angels to the soul, and yet be sure that the power by which a man shall walk with God preceded them, informs them, surpasses them, and is so full and free that it overflows all churches, books and created beings, as if you should set as many vessels in a fountain of living water. It is like the sun that fills a cup of every flower in your gardens, and yet fills just as full every wild flower on the boundless prairies : blesses me when I bend, worshipping in spirit and in truth, on Gerizim or Zion ; when I gather my children around me as Enoch did, to tell them that the great God who made this green valley, this shining river and sandy desert, who holds those far blue mountains fast on their sunless pillars, and folds the sparrow to its rest out on the slender branch under the stars,—this God is their Father and mine : touches me when I meet some kindred soul, or walk alone in the shadow of great woods, and commune of those ever-fresh mysteries of life and the life to come, while the birds sing in the branches, and the sun shoots down shafts of splendor, or the clouds gather, and the thunders shake the great boles, awing me into a silence more sacred than our most sacred speech ; or, when I find a man who can say words that make me step out more stoutly and steadily, who will turn a grave, sweet face of pity to me when I stumble, will lift me out of the dust when I fall, will lend me a shoulder when I am weary, will make me feel that there is at least one true soul abroad in the world, walking with God, listening to His voice,



touching His hand, and sure whenever the time shall come for him to be taken up, to reveal some new hint of heaven, as he turns his face for a moment ere he enters within the portal.

Now, this is what we are trying to establish and maintain, this most primitive and yet most perennial faith; to see in these most blessed things, not the masters, but the servants of the soul; to hold all questions of Bible, Intercessor, Church, Sabbath, and Sacrament as the means of grace, but not the end. God is the end of all our worship and service; and we want to build this faith into a power massive enough to stand impregnable against all the assaults of the devil, under every guise; and may the God that walked with Enoch walk with us and help us in this purpose.

We want free churches in this free land—churches that are strong, yet delicate; massive, but tender; Christ-like and constant, gracious and good. And we want all who are one with us in this purpose to join hands and help us. Every large, free thinker should stand by such freedom; every believer in God, not as shut up in a corner and hemmed in by these fire-bars, but as in the whole world, with all men for his children, should be glad of such a faith; and I doubt not but the time is coming when this will be the universal religion. We must work for that time, give our money for it, our labor, and if need be, our life.

## VI.

### The Holiness of Helpfulness.

ROM. xii. 11: "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

GEORGE STEPHENSON was getting ready to go to Methodist meeting. He was a young man, just at that period in life when young men go to Methodist meeting more and more until they are brought directly under the influence of the master-spirit of the place, and become in a sense religious men. There ~~was~~ much doubt in my mind, as I read this young man's life

up to this time, that he is in a fair way to that preferment. He has that thread of natural piety and goodness in his nature that is almost sure to draw him into a more intimate relation with the forms and industries of the recognized religious life about him, if nothing prevent. I said he was getting ready to go to the meeting, when a neighbour came to tell him he was wanted. He was then running an engine at a coal-pit. There was another pit between this and his home, which he passed every day, that had been flooded with water, so that the men were beaten out. The company got a steam-pump to clear the pit, and kept it at work for twelve months, with no success at all. The water, when they had been pumping twelve months, was as deep as when they first began to pump, and the wives and children were starving for bread.

This young Stephenson had a most active energy and fervent spirit towards whatever went by steam. The great ambition of his boyhood was to run an engine; and when he rose to that position, as he did very soon—for it is a cheering fact, that while a man may long for a hundred things and not get one, a boy hardly ever fails to accomplish *his* purpose if he has a genuine hunger to be, or to do, some particular thing,—when this boy rose to the position he wanted, he treated his engine as if he loved her. Whenever there was a holiday and the works were stopped, instead of going out with the rest, he studied her until she became as familiar to him as his own right hand. He was not slothful in business, and he was fervent in spirit. Intimate with the charge that was laid upon him, he soon began to perceive why those women and children were starving. The difference between what the pump was, and what it ought to be, was the difference between a tall, slender, narrow-chested man and a short, sturdy, broad-chested man, engaged in digging earth or scooping out water. Every pump owner in the countryside had tried to mend this pump and failed,—because, I suppose, pump-mending and engine-running with them was a business and not a passion. This young man, with the fervent spirit, said one day, as he went past the pit, “I can clear that pit in a week;” and they laughed him to scorn. But they could not laugh the water to scorn; and so at last they sent

for him to come and try his hand. He went there instead of going to the church. He went into the pit on a Sunday morning, and worked all that day, and until the next Sunday, cleared out all the water in a week, and sent the men down to earn their children bread.

From that time the young man comes into notice. He works through all sorts of opposition, and never rests until he has got an engine to run fifty miles an hour. He is, more than any other man, entitled to be called the Father of the railroad system. He kept the diligent hand and fervent heart right on to the end of his life. He was a good husband, a good father, a good friend, and a good citizen. But it is a curious fact that from the time when he was prevented from going to meeting on that Saturday night, he never seems to have gone, or to have thought of going again, to the end of his life. He did not turn religious, as we say, even when he had nothing else to do, but lived a kindly, sunny, or shadowy, faithful life, right on to the end, and then died quietly, and made no sign. He never said he feared he had done wrong in turning from that church to that coal-pit, and trying to mend the pump on Sunday, instead of keeping the Sabbath day holy by doing nothing; indeed, it never seems to have occurred to him to think the matter over in any way whatever: his heart was too full, and his hand too busy about engines, to find room for the idea; to find time, as we should say, to save his soul. And so it brings up a question, that to me has a good deal of interest, namely: While this man was so busy and so fervent in the way I have noted, did he also serve the Lord? or, from the moment he turned aside from the meeting, and began to lose that sense and liking for meetings, and their peculiar services, did he cease to serve the Lord altogether, and remaining only diligent in business and fervent in spirit, go out of this world into darkness and despair?

Now, I am well aware what the common answer to such a question would be: it would be, "We must leave him in the hands of God; we cannot answer the question, because we have no data." But that is not true. If he had been an idle good-for-nothing, a scampish sharper, an abandoned libertine, an unprincipled truckler, or a political vulture; if he had beaten *his*, trained up his child in the way he should go—to

state's prison: if he had been a common nuisance for sixty-nine years and a half, never going into a church except to make a disturbance, never keeping the Sabbath except in sensual sleep, and six months before his death, or six weeks or six days, had repented of his sin, had led a good and pure life, adopted religious ideas like those commonly held, and said clearly that he believed God had pardoned his sins, and would take him to heaven, we should feel the utmost confidence of that man's safety from that date. But we do not feel sure for this other man. It is a great mystery, and we must leave him in the hands of God. But if you push us to the fair conclusion of our own standard of religious belief, and the books we adopt, we feel compelled to say that he has gone to hell.

Now this looks to me like a tremendous piece of injustice on the very face of it. I think if a man could be brought face to face with the question as I have stated it, and as it really stands in the common theological systems; could see these men brought up before what are called our Evangelical churches, having never heard of these peculiar religious ideas up to that time; could see the men examined, and then observe which man was sent upward and which downward by these standards, his conclusion would be, that there was something radically wrong in their premises; and I can well imagine how such a man would argue for a new trial. He would say, "I know nothing at all about your authorities for this curious decision. You tell me that they bear the mint mark of divinity; that they have come to you from the remotest antiquity; from kings, and prophets, and apostles, and the Son of God himself; that they are the fruit of a divine inspiration, foreshadowed in prophecies, confirmed by miracles, and held by martyrs at the stake." Now all this may be true; but I know something of the laws of this Universe,—of what enters into the real life of man for blessing and for hurt. I cannot and I will not, deny the claim of this man, who has kept the divine law six months out of threescore and ten years, to be saved. It is always right to do right; and a man is bound upward from the moment he begins to do well. Whenever that may be he begins to come out of his rags and wretchedness

into a wholesome purity and happiness. But where you have one reason on your authorities for saying that this man is good and ascended, because he has done what you say for six months out of the threescore and ten years of his life, I have six score and twenty good reasons for the assurance that this other man is also ascended, because he has done good according to the organic laws of the world ever since he came into it.

Now, be sure I have not brought up this question only to prove that the man I have mentioned for illustration was saved, —though the common interpreters of the Christian doctrine claim that by their standards it is possible he should be saved, —but to make the man, as he represents an idea of very great importance in our life, the basis of some discussion of a segment, at least, of true religion.

And I say a segment, because religion in all its reaches is as boundless as the Spirit of God, and the infinitely varied life of man can make it, and there can be no exhaustive system of religion, in the hard, dry sense of the term. Every system is a statement, a proposition, a shadow of the principles that impress most deeply the man who makes it. The Calvinist has not the same idea of Free Grace the Arminian has, nor the Arminian the same idea of Predestination the Calvinist has. The Episcopalian, and Quaker, and Presbyterian have no common union except that which comes from standing at the angles of a triangle as far as possible apart. The men who sprinkle, and the men who immerse, and the men who do neither, can all show exhaustive reason for their particular methods. And I think the reason for all this lies far less in the perverseness of the men, than in their powerlessness to see all the glory and grandeur of the truth of God that is in the world.

Schools of theology are like schools of painting—they are in some measure the copy of a copy. They copy from their great master, and he copied from God. Walking down the world of truth and beauty, the great painter sees things that make his soul aflame with their beauty and wonder; mountains, meadows, woodlands, rivers, men and women, sun and shadow, fill him with a sense of their intimate, unutterable divinity.

But he cannot paint all he sees ; he can paint really very little, but he paints what he can—he follows the bent of his own genius and inspiration ; he brings in here a meadow, and there a wood ; here a mountain, and there a river ; here a flower, and there a figure ; here a bit of marvellous sunlight, and there a wonderful touch of shadow ; and makes them all glorious or sombre in the coloring of his own soul, and when the picture is done, those that love it and follow it, declare that it exhausts all perfection. But beautiful as it may be, the man has got in but a very small piece of the infinite beauty that is all about him. And so it is in religious truth : no one system exhausts even the Bible ; how much less the boundless wealth of truth, of which the Bible is but the part of a record. The system may be a good thing for the men who love that method, trying faithfully to copy the great original who founded the school ; the copyist in the one case will hardly need write under his composition, " This is a mountain," and " This is a man," any more than in the other he will need to say, " I am religious, after the school of Calvin or Luther." Still the Rembrandt splendors of Calvin, the sober-gray realism of Fox, the water-color landscape of our Baptist brother, the broad Hogarths of Wesley, true to exaggeration, the sunny Claude-like pictures of Channing, the often stern Salvator pieces of Parker, and the rich composition of the Episcopal, which in some lights seem to rise to the beauty and truth of the best Turners, and in other lights to descend to the stage effects of Martin, and of which no one seems to be sure about the original, or whether they be one—all these are true in their way to what the master saw—a transcript of things that filled his soul with keen delight, or holy rapture, or awful solemnity. But beyond them, and above them, and all about them, were other meadows " beautiful as the gardens of the angels upon the slopes of Eden, other forests that cover the mountains like the shadow of God, other rivers that move like his own eternity."

And so the claim that not one of the sects, nor all the sects together, have exhausted the truth, brings the claim of this man into court to come in for a share, not of salvation only in the life to come, but of glory in the best, the most religious

sense, in the life that now is, though he did take such a singular stand. When my friends said to me while yet a Methodist preacher, "How can you preach for Dr. Furness, in Philadelphia, who is a Unitarian? we should suppose you could not find anything to say that these people would listen to; and yet be true to your Methodism;" I replied, "I find it easier to preach to them than to preach at home; for I leap over the fence that bounds the system of Methodism, and as they are already over the fence that has bounded the system of Unitarianism, we all meet in the boundless world of truth and beauty which God has made outside, and it is wonderful how much we find to talk about when we get there.

I think the vital point in the question at issue turns on whether, what a man thinks and feels, or what he does, is to be considered the essential element in his life. Whether certain ideas, feelings, and industries in relation to what we agree to call religion, are to be counted the great elements in the nobility of this life, and the safety of the life to come; or whether to do faithfully, with or without them, the one good thing which the passionate heart of the man indicates that he was created to do, is the true way to live.

I think also the honest verdict of the human heart turns to the deed; and I picked up a remarkable illustration of this, when once I was called to a place named Constantine, in Michigan, to attend the funeral of a gentleman I had known. He was a good man, but he made no profession of religion; never went to church; kept aloof from all sects. He had been for some time in delicate health, so that it was dangerous for him to travel in bad weather; when just in the twilight of one of the most terrible spring nights, he was summoned to Lansing, to consult on the impending rebellion. His wife tried to keep him home until morning; but he felt he must go. He went, and never held his head up after. In my sermon I pointed out the organic elements in the life of a man; how holily he may live as a father and husband and friend; mentioned how my hearers knew the record our friend had made, and touched on the grandeur of the last deed in which he gave his life, and then said, "Is not this religion?" I was the first man holding

this faith openly, who had ever spoken there, but it was touching to see how readily those men and women caught the idea, with what joy they received it, and how they thanked me for confirming what had been in their hearts as a natural and necessary idea.

And once after this I visited Camp Douglas, and sat down on the cot of a sick man, a prisoner from the South. He said, "Are you a minister?" I answered, "Yes." "What sort, Baptist?" "No." "Methodist?" "No." "Presbyterian?" I wanted to see how far he knew, and so still said, "No." I suppose these were all he had ever heard about, for he opened his eyes wide, when he had exhausted his catalogue, and said, "What then?" I answered, "Unitarian." "Ah," said he, "I never heard of that before. What do they believe?" So I told him how they believe God is our Father, and cares for us every one, and how he takes a man for what he is rather than for what he says, and how after death he is just as much our Father as he was before. "Well," said the man, "I never heard that before; but that's right; come see me again." I went, I think, on the third day, but his cot was empty; he had gone to the Father.

John Ruskin, in one of his chapters on Modern Painters, enters into a discussion of the meanings of help. He says the clouds may come together, but they are no help to each other, and so the removal of one part is no injury to the rest, but if you take the sap or bark or pith from a plant, you do that plant essential injury, for the part you take away has taken hold on that power we call life, by which all things in the plant help each other; take a part from that power so that it cannot help the rest, and it becomes what we call dead. Then he says, if you take a limb from an animal, it is a far greater injury than to take a limb from a tree, because intensity of life is intensity of helpfulness; the more perfect the help the more dreadful the loss; the more intense the life the more terrible the corruption, and most terrible of all in a man, because his life is the most helpful and most intense of all. And so he ranges through this great thought until he finds that the name, which of all others is most



expressive of the being of God, is that of the Helpful One, or, in our softer Saxon, the Holy One.

Now to me, this expresses exactly the idea that underlies life. The helpful life is the holy life. Holiness is help; sin is hindrance. At whatever point we touch life to help it, in whatever way we help the world and do not hinder it, whether by our prayers, and songs, and sermons, and industry in the church, or by the creation of a locomotive, or the construction of a railroad, or the painting of a picture, or the writing of a book, or the digging of a drain, or the forging of a horse-shoe, or the fighting of a battle—in whatsoever thing we do, if we really help and do not hinder, then that is a holy life. And in whatever way we hinder the world, and stand in the way of its life, its healthy, hearty growth, by doing what will hurt or hinder men in the largest sense, then that, being the reverse of helpful, is a sinful life. The first principles of sin and holiness reach back into all creeds and churches as far as they stand true to life, and no more; and the ultimate touchstone of holiness is the organic law by which the best interests of the whole man can be secured in his relation to the whole world, and all the men that are in it.

And there is a beautiful illustration of this principle in two related incidents in the life of Christ. When he sat down weary at the well, the Samaritan woman came to fill her pitcher, and entering into conversation with him, found that she had got hold of a preacher or prophet, and thinking to get a solution of the old vexed question, as to which was the true religion, Samaritan or Jew, said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem men ought to worship." He replied, "Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews." But when he heard the story, or saw in some inward way, how a man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, who stripped him and wounded him and left him for dead, and how two Jews, a priest and a Levite, men who stood first among the Jews in the relation of true church worship,—if praying and singing be true worship,—when he saw them go

over to the other side, and leave the helpless man to his fate, and saw one of those Samaritans come along, who did not know what they worshipped, saw him leap from his horse in a great flood of pity and mercy, hold up the poor fellow's head, stanch his wounds, set him on his own beast and trudge along on foot himself, as if there was not a robber within a thousand miles, carry him to a tavern, and not throw him on the county when he got there, but pledge himself to pay all the expenses, and then walk away as if he had done one of the most common things in the world,—the great soul saw past the old dogma, into this fresh organic law, this universal principle of worship, this holiness of helpfulness, and his soul clave to the soul of the Samaritan who knew not God.

And be sure this principle underlies every other principle whatever in the religious life. I can teach God really just so far as I am good. Christ will be divine greatly by my divinity. I am my own proof, before letters, of the intrinsic worth of human nature. I shall not have much trouble in proving to a man God is our Father, if I can prove to him I am his brother. That volume of the Evidences of Christianity which the other side never did answer, and never will, is a book written on what the apostle calls the fleshly tables of the heart.

And this is the grand use of churches, systems, sacraments, and ceremonies. They reach back into the principle of helpfulness to find their seal; they are centres of help to the world, and to the man, or they are nothing: I care not one pin for their age, evidences, liturgies, theologies. If the church that holds them and holds you, cannot help you, do not go to it. If it does help you, do not dare to stay away, when you need help; and that, I take it, with most of us, is pretty much all the time. If your church does not help others, let it perish. If it does, care for it as you care for every noble and helpful thing: nay, care for it as the noblest. If the liberal Christian preacher here, or anywhere, cannot help you in your most central and sacred life, and the Catholic bishop can, then I charge you, on your allegiance to God and your own soul, go to the bishop by the shortest route; but if we do help you, if our words and deeds touch some spring, that is to all the rest of

your manhood what the mainspring is to a watch, if we help you to a clearer vision and a deeper trust, to a fairer hope and a more abundant helpfulness, then we take hold on first things; we stand to you in the old apostolic relation; we carry the keys, the bishop does not; and every such man is the rock on which the Master will build his church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Here, then, was the great use of the man I have noted for illustration—his place in the world was not in the church, but in the foundery—he was not the heart, but the hand in the body of Christ; but he was the hand, and his mission was to be strong, diligent, faithful, true to his trust, and let all the rest take care of itself. God raised him up to inaugurate railroads; woe to him if he does not do that. He will endanger his soul if he neglects that. His place on that Sunday was in the coal-pit; woe to him if the Master comes and finds him in the Methodist meeting. The great problem for him to solve is not whether he is going to be happy in meeting, or happy on his death-bed, or happy at all on this earth, but if he is going to be helpful in the one supreme way in which God has made him to be helpful. If he cannot be a true husband, and father, and friend, and man, and machine-maker, except he belong to the church, then at his peril he fails to join one. If the church and its religious ideas, emotions, and inspiration are needed to make him a good man, if he is not brave, faithful, strong, and loving, and the church can aid him to be all that, as I believe it can, then he must seek the church; but if all that is in him, then God is in Him to will and to do of His good pleasure, and when he carries that locomotive up to the throne, God will say, "Well done."

There can be no more striking and conclusive proof of where the claim ought to rest for the intrinsic worth of that, for the lack of which most religious teachers are conscientiously compelled to send such men as Stephenson to the pit, than to notice the way in which the war tried them, as by fire. It is a most striking study. From 1857 to 1861 the whole land went under a great tide of revival. From Chicago our Young Men's Christian Association went to New Orleans, joined there in prayers

and praises. It was but one instance in a thousand. The entire religious world was one. But when the south seceded, the church seceded with the state, and then came the wonder. These men held precisely the same religious beliefs and dogmas, uttered the same prayers and received the same sacraments as they had always done ; and they found that those things would work as solidly to inspire treason as truth. "When Massa Jackson pray all night," his body servant said, "den I pack his tings ; I know he go on a raid." Our great dead friend, our father Abraham, noticed this in our darkest days, and said, the rebels prayed a great deal, and to all appearances, with the best results. So can the wine the Samaritan takes to restore the dying man on the road to Jericho, madden the robber to murder them both. It is only in being true and right, in being on the side of truth, and justice, and humanity, only in reaching back into first things and being a helper there, that then God will be true, and every man godlike, whose life is that of noble grain.

And so ideas, emotions, creeds, meetings, sacraments, and ceremonies are all good as they do good : but they are as passive as the powder which, for ought I know, came out of the one cask to slay our father Abraham, and the wretched murderer by whose hand he fell. It is a weighty thing to me, that Christ makes those men, to whom he tells us he will say, "Come ye blessed," entirely unconscious that the things they had done were in any particular way religious. To be sure they had visited prisons, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and tended the sick ; but then what religion was there about that any more than in the Samaritan's saving the life of that dying Jew ? That was merely humanity, helpfulness, morality. But the prayers the man said when he got back to Mount Gerizim, the purifications and praises he went through there, these were his religion. I have no doubt that they did help him, that they inspired him, and kept his heart fresh to do just so next time. But the thing he did, and not the belief he held, or the prayers he said, or the day he observed—the thing he did was his religion ; the helpfulness of the man was his holiness, as it will be to those to whom Christ will say, "Well done ;" while on the other side, those to whom he will say, "Depart ye

cursed," are the men who will cry, "Did we not teach in thy name, and cast out devils, and work wonders?" But he will say, "Depart; I never knew you. You preached and did wonders, but you did not help." And so entirely does this helpfulness make our holiness, that the same deep and strong principle is made to reach across the worlds, and in the life to come, to give the faithful helper more power to help, as the best gift of God in heaven. The poet sings of a noble man dead,—

"How can we doubt that for one so true  
There must be other noble work to do?"

The Lord says, "Well done; thou hast been ruler over ten pounds, I will make thee ruler over ten cities."

And so I would affirm and rejoice in a church broad enough to take into full membership and full communion all these men who may never come inside the church doors, who never do a hand's turn at church work, who know nothing of our belief or practices, but whose whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, are devoted to some piece of helpfulness that shall lift this dark world into the sun;—wherever that man may be working the part of him that sent him, whether at the anvil, like my own father, or at the foot of Missionary Ridge, charging up hill like my adopted son, or resting for a moment to watch the mimic life on the stage with Abraham Lincoln; let the Angel of Death come ever so suddenly, cast over them his white robe and whisper peace, that place in which he finds them is the very nearest point to heaven; and the first word that greets them is the glad "Well done." And I would have all such true and faithful men know this; would fain say to them, "This that you are doing is work for God; you may be a saint of God in the place where you stand."

Friends, a mere feeling may fail you, but a helpful spirit never can, because that is a holy spirit. The ready hand and the fervent heart, if the one work and the other beat for good, is sure to be right. You mothers may be occupied with work for your children in the house, until you have no time for what you call religion; you men may not know which way to turn in consequence of business in the office, and you may wonder whether so much to do in this world is safe for the next; you

may long for the forms and feelings that are counted of such importance in many churches. Now do not misunderstand me : if they would help you to be more helpful, you cannot get too many. But if they stand instead of your helpfulness, so that in feeling happy you think you are religious, and are not helpful, they are dangerous, and they may come to be deadly.

You may die, as this man did, at the close of a long, faithful, helpful life, and give no sign ; and yet no understanding soul will doubt that, for one so true there must be other nobler work to do ; or you may die, with a testimony shining like burnished gold, at the end of a life in which you did not even drive away the dogs from the beggar at your gate, but you will wake up in the torment of an unsatisfied soul, and go into the hell of lost opportunities.

And if you say, "I am hedged about, I can do nothing ; I fain would help, but I cannot,"—your very longing is help. "They also serve who only stand and wait." It is never true that we are not helpers ; where the fervent heart is there is the servant of God, and unto him comes ever with the work the reward. He is still and strong in God, because he is a co-worker with God, and his life holds for itself a secret which is not known to another—he has come in his very work to the rest that remaineth.

"Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase)  
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
 And saw within the shadow of his room,  
 Making it rich, like a lily in bloom,  
 An angel writing in a book of gold.  
 Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,  
 And to the presence in the room he said,  
 'What writest thou?' The vision raised its head,  
 And with a look made of all sweet accord,  
 Answered, 'The names of those who love the Lord !'  
 'And is mine one?' asked Abou. 'Nay, not so,'  
 Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,  
 But cheerily still, and said, 'I pray thee, then,  
 Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.'  
 The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night  
 He came again with great awakening light,  
 And showed the names whom love of God had blest ;  
 And lo, Ben Adhem's name led all the rest !"

## VII.

## G a s h m u .

NEH. vi. 6 : "It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it."

MY text centres in some human interests that were painfully real twenty-two hundred years ago ; and I propose, first, to tell you those parts of the story that especially touch the text, and second, to note for you how the text again touches our life and time.

Nehemiah was cup-bearer to an old Persian king. The position was one of great trust. He was a Jew, a prince of the old line, whose father had preferred Persia to Palestine, and remained there when a great many of his countrymen went out of the captivity to the fatherland. It is no matter what his reasons were for settling, but I suppose he never quite forgot the old country,—no man ever does,—and contrived to transmit the love to his son, who one day happened on some Jews, fresh from Jerusalem, who told him that the people there were in very great distress ; the whole province was in affliction ; the walls of the city broken down, the gates burned with fire ; and he tells us when he heard these things he sat down and wept and mourned, and besought God to help him get things righted. Then he determined to appeal to the king, but had to wait four months for the right moment. One day he had to give the king wine ; he was very much troubled : the king saw by his face that he was sad, and said, "Why art thou sad? thou art not sick ; this must be some heart sorrow." Then he said, "O king, why should I not be sad, when the city, the place of the graves of my fathers, lieth waste, and the gates are burned with fire." Then the king said, "What is thy request?" And I said unto the king, "Send me to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it." So the king said, "How long wilt thou be gone?" And I set a time ; and the king sent me away, and gave me letters to the governor to pass me through the wilderness of Judah, and a letter to the chief forester, bidding him give me whatever *timber* I wanted.

The good patriot in good time got to Jerusalem, and found about the place a party with some power, not only content to see this ruin, but determined to cry down reform; and it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. There is then a touching picture of three days silence, in which, no doubt, he pondered what had best be done. Then he rose up in the night, and with one horse and a few men made a secret survey of the ground, from the valley gate to the dragon well, from the dragon well to the fountain gate; then to the king's pool, where the ruin was so bad his horse could not get along at all. Then he went in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back and entered the gate of the valley, and so returned; telling neither priests, nor rulers, nor nobles what he had done. And then, when all was ready he said, "See, now, what distress we are in! let us build up the walls of Jerusalem, and take away the reproach." And I told them how the hand of God was upon me, and told them the king's words. Then they all said, "Let us rise up and build." So one party built to the sheep gate, and another to the fish gate, and one to the old gate, and one to the palace gate, and one to the valley gate, and one to the fountain gate, and one to the sepulchres, and one to the armory, and one to the horse gate. And the goldsmiths did a piece, and the apothecaries a piece, and the ministers a piece; and one man, whose children have spread over all the earth, repaired a little piece that stood just opposite his own chamber; and one family, whose children are not all lost, thank God, built a thousand cubits. So, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, early in our September, fifty-two days from the time they began, walls and gates and locks and bars were all done.

But if this earnest, silent man had done no more than simply build the walls of his native city, I should not select him from ten thousand who have done as well or better. The real thing is, with him as it is with all of us, what he built with the wall; what he went through to build it; what the devil, in different forms, did to stop him, and how he kept on



finding new sources of power for the exigencies of the time, holding fast steadily to God until his work was done. That is the jewel in this setting of the Scriptures that brings the man and his lesson near to you and me.

Three men especially in the community, were determined to oppose all attempts at renovation. They said it was rank rebellion against the king. They cried out, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they right things in a day? Will they create good stones out of burnt rubbish? Why, if a fox go up, he will break down their wall. If they go to do this work, rather than let them, we will surprise and kill them." But this man said, "The God of heaven will prosper us, and so we will build." And the people had a mind to work. So they prayed to God, and set a watch; and he said, "Do not be afraid, but fight for your homes, and brothers, and sons, and wives, and daughters." So some builded the wall, and some held the spears and shields; and every builder had a sword girded on his side, and he says, "I set men to blow the trumpet, so that wherever the trumpet sounded, the people should be ready to fight." So we builded and were ready to fight, and from the time when we began until we ended, from morning to starlight, and from starlight to morning, we were working and watching, and not one of us put off our garments except for the washing.

Then, when the wall was builded in the face of this enmity, when there was no hope for force, they tried fraud. They sent four times to ask this great worker to come into council, and four times he replied, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come to you?" Then one of them sent his servant, with an open letter in his hand, in which was written, "It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou art intending to rebel, and hast built the wall so that thou mayest be a king, and hast set preachers in Jerusalem to proclaim thee king. Now, we will report all this to the court. Come, if thou wilt not confer with us, and let us counsel." Then he says, I sent to them, saying, "There

is no such thing done. Ye are making it out of your own heart, to stop the good work." Finally, a man came, as he claimed, from the Lord, and saith, "Go into the temple, and shut thyself in to save thy life, for they mean to kill thee in the night." But I said, "Shall such a man as I flee into the temple to save my life? Where is the man that would do that? I will not go in." And when I had said that, I saw the Lord had not sent him. So the wall was finished. My text then touches, as you see, one of the most trying sorts of hinderance that every man must face and conquer, who determines to do anything ahead of the littleness and unfaithfulness of the time. And now I will note,—

I. Who Gashmu was.

II. What he tried to do; and,

III. What came of it.

I. Personally, we do not know Gashmu from the ten thousand men of his era. He was Gashmu the Arabian, and that is all.

But his real identity is not centred on the year of his birth, or who was his father, or how much he was worth, but on what he did. When our life begins, our name is almost everything; but when our life is ended, it has been heavily freighted with good or evil, and is what the things are to which it gives personal identity. This man's house has crumbled into ruin. His father, his birthday, and his money at interest have all gone into a night, for which there is no morning. The woman that loved him, the children that were born to him, the men that fought him or flattered him, have not left even a shadow on the face of the earth. What church he went to, what creed he held to, what book was most sacred to him, what ideas in politics, or morals, or religion, were final and unquestionable—these things have all gone, and left no more trace of the man than the particular flowers he tended under that September sun. But he did one solid thing; he came out square against a man who was determined to do good, and was earnestly doing it, and tried to put him down. Gashmu, I suppose, was a man whose word went a good way in that little corner of the world; a

man worth referring to when you wanted to make a thing go. If he said it was so, there was no more to be said. A man who had paid his way, and kept a good name, and never disturbed his neighbourhood with visionary projects, and never, up to that time, let them see that he was ignorant, or stupid, or shallow. Perhaps he did not even know it himself; or, it may be, that he was not stupid, but only selfish, or a bigot, and here was the fire to the dry wood that had been piled ready; here the one reason why he should cry, "Lead us not into temptation;" here the sin that so easily beat him.

He might have satisfied himself in half an hour that this man was all right; half an hour's talk would have convinced him that Nehemiah was an estimable, truthful, and unselfish man as ever lived. Gashmu was probably on the wrong side at the start, and was too proud to acknowledge it; or he did not like Nehemiah the first time he saw him; or had lived so long beside the ruins that he had come to admire them more than sound walls;—how can I tell you what were the motive powers that pushed him on to sin, when I see all these reasons, and a score of others, actuating the Gashmus of to-day. A motive power there must have been, but that is lost with all that he had or was. This only, this one thing is left: A good man was doing a good work with all his might, and bad men tried to hinder him. They tried to hurt his person. Gashmu was above that. He was none of your common rowdies. Sanballat and Tobiah might do that, but not Gashmu; yet Gashmu will sit there and muse his dislike, and be glad to hear the petty stories that float like thistle-down through the neighborhood against the innocent man; words are twisted and turned to meanings Nehemiah never thought of, and Gashmu hopes they are true; he wishes they were true; the wish is the father to the thought, and he believes them. One story, in particular, gets credence. This man means to be a king. I suppose at first it was only, "I wonder if he does not mean to be a king." Then "I guess he does mean to be a king." Gashmu hears the floating absurdity. On any other subject he would pronounce anything so empty as this rumor silly; but when this man is ~~the~~ subject of the rumor, he would rather believe it than not.

He will go over the first thing to-morrow and take a look at things, not at the man, but at the walls. Then the whole bad nature of him is stirred to its uttermost deep.

There can be no reason short of rebellion to justify such a work as that ; he has no doubt in his own mind now about the rebellion ; he remembers twenty instances in which men have prepared for rebellion in exactly the same way ; this man certainly means to rebel. But so far Gashmu is free from the last penalty ; he can go home and be silent, and he will be saved from the shame of all the ages. No, he cannot do that, for as he goes home, ready ears listen, and the fatal word is uttered in his vexation, "That man certainly means to be a king ;" and he can never get that word back again, though he weep tears of blood for it. Before night it is repeated by twenty tongues, "He intends to rebel : Gashmu says it." So Gashmu has permitted his prejudices to grow into a lie. Gashmu is to live thousands of years for one purely false assertion, and to be the representative man of unprincipled gossips and narrow bigots as long as the world stands.

He cannot kill the shame ; no ! nor by living can he live it down. The days have grown to weeks, the weeks to months, the months to years, the years to ages, and that is still a sad name, branded with a lie. "It is commonly reported, and Gashmu said it." Note now, I pray you, some Gashmus in our churches, and our social and national life. First of all, there are Gashmus in the church, and Gashmu said it, is at the bottom of nine tenths of all the differences in Christendom.

I suppose that men will for ever prefer this or that form of religion, as the Switzer prefers a mountain and the Hollander a flat. They were born to it. The first Switzer had the preference for mountains strong in his nature, and it has rooted itself deeper into every new age. So it is in the things which are, as it were, outside vital religion in all churches. The Hollander can live in Switzerland, and the Switzer in Holland, but not so well or so happily it may be ; still, the fact that they can live a stout life when they change places, is conclusive on the vital life there is in both countries for both men. So it is in churches.

Some men like their religion, as the eagle likes his nest, on a bare crag above the reach of the fowler, commanding great sweeps of country and utterly alone ; and some, like the lark, will soar while they sing, but build a nest on the sward with all common and lowly things that stay on the earth ; and if we could ever grow so large-hearted as to recognise this spiritual conformation, it would trouble us no more to see a good man in the church of Rome than it troubles the eagle to see the lark. It would be as natural and beautiful for us to see men in the Presbyterian church, or in the Episcopalian, as it is to see one bird build in a thorn bush, another in an apple tree, and a third in a three century pine, or to see a Switzer at Berne, and a Hollander in Rotterdam. But it is notorious that this is not so. If you push the good Baptist brother to the last result of his creed, you are pretty sure to find that he can only give you the choice of very cold water, or something exactly at the other point of the diameter. The Unitarian can be logical, only in showing that Trinitarians are idolaters. Then we are as far apart as Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion were in the old time. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans ; the Episcopalians have none with the Presbyterians, and if the members of both were not far better than the set Gashmuisms of their churches, they would be obliged to count the pastors of the Unitarian churches very wicked men.

Now, who is accountable for all this ? Gashmu. It is commonly reported, and Gashmu said it. These men and women have natures as tolerant as Hollander and Switzer to swamp and mountain. They love each other heartily, and will laugh or weep for the same gladness or gloom. They will stand at the same death-bed, and look upward in the same conviction that heaven lies above us, and pass round the same little child with the same original and beautiful untruthfulness about its perfect beauty and parental resemblance, and as long as they keep the good sweet nature, be interested alike in all these wonderful revelations to youth and maiden, which are just as fresh while the world grows older, as was the first snow-drop of Eden. But watch us when we come  
the confines of creeds ; just as we grow tolerant here,

we are counted out as backsliders ; let us be large-hearted here, and we become suspected. Who has sundered us? Gashmu. Away back in the old time, a man came, no matter whether he belonged to this church or that, saw the walls of Zion broken down and in ruins, was smitten to the heart, won men over to help him, turned to with all his might and began to repair the waste places, but Gashmu, who had got to consider the ruin just about what he wanted, got a grain of bitterness into his soul,—

“ One little pitted speck is garnered fruit,  
Which, rotting inward, slowly moulders all.”

And there was uncertainty and trouble all about. The men who had lived there all their life, and were contented with the ruin, could not tell what this renovation meant. Then reports got about of designs upon the authority of the king ; but it was Gashmu who made the mischief a finality. He was the man who knew most ; the man the rest trusted to find out what these men were about. He did not go to the reformer and ask to see his charter. He took counsel with his own prejudice and preference, and made that his foundation, and said, This is rebellion, without the shadow of a doubt, and he is the man who made the gap. Gashmu said it, and we believe Gashmu rather than the holiest worshippers of our own natures, and stand apart in that which, above all things, should bring us together. We say it is all wrong for the Switzer to prefer the mountain, or the Hollander the marsh, or the eagle the cliff, or the skylark the sod ; “ we distort our nature ever for our work, and count our right hands stronger for being hoofs.” We forget that,

“ When all is tried, all done, all counted here,  
All creeds, sects, churches, all philosophies,  
That Love just puts his hand out in a dream,  
And straight outreaches all things.”

In the churches, no doubt, we should all be nearer and sweeter in Christian intercourse but for this Gashmu, who goes about blinking here and there at other sects, and asserting that what may be so, is so ; and Gashmu said it, seals many an opening fountain of sweet Christian refreshing, fastens ingenuous young

souls into a rigid intolerance, and builds fences between Christian men so high, that it is hopeless trying to get over.

So again in our social life, Gashmu is the curbstone where all the mischief is finally unloaded. Little rumors of no moment, the tiny sparks that are struck off in the quick, hearty friction of the daily life, need Gashmu to blow them into smoke and fire. Alone, they would die out the moment they were struck, but when they strike Gashmu, there is no dying. If it is commonly reported, and Gashmu said it, it takes a strong decision to say, the moment we hear it, "That's a lie." Your social Gashmu means well on his own estimate of things, too; his main faults are narrowness and hastiness, and a strong tendency to measure all men by his own personal standard. Perhaps he is, on the whole, a good man; lives a life that wins the respect of a whole town; tells the truth so constantly that his word is as good as gold. But some one man does not train with him; he does not like that man at all; does not understand him; and so cultivates a little feeling of dislike, until it bulges into a receptiveness of idle rumors, that would be like mere straws if they were reported of a man he loves. Yet he will nurse them, and cherish them, and at some moment his dislike will come to a head, and he will say, "I have no doubt it is true." Then Gashmu said it, clips that man's margin at the bank, draws the sunshine out of half the faces he meets on the street, and puts him in a position that, it may be, brings the very tendencies for which Gashmu has spotted him; for, "being observed where observation is not sympathy, is just being tortured." How many grown men and women regret bitterly to-day some such misjudgment on another,—the hasty word of a single moment, that we could never recall and never atone for, by which the life of the man or woman about whom we said it has been darkened and injured past redemption. It was a small matter of itself, but Gashmu said it, and that was like sowing the thing in black prairie loam, insuring to us a harvest of bitter regrets, and to our victim a harvest of bitter memories.

Then we have Gashmus in the nation and the public life; and Gashmu said it, is the most certain seven-barrelled Springfield repeater that the devil has in his whole armory. But I

warn you here against believing that this Gashmu of the old heathen world is only to be found on the one side. It is impossible to study the course of public life, and not conclude that he is on all sides of all public questions, and is about as mischievous on one side as another. Gashmu is never the man that looks into things, and then takes his side and stands to it for conscience sake ; but the man who speaks out of his narrow heart and mind the lie he wants to be true, and wants others to believe. I suppose, while there is a free and healthy government in this or any other country, there will be conservatism and radicalism ; a party that will hold on, as long as it can, to things as they are, and a party that will want to go ahead and reform them. And, standing as I have always done, from pure choice, with radicals, I would still try to see the good there is in conservatism, and to respect men who stand by this conviction, pleading that we shall not pull down the old house, however rickety and inconvenient it may be, before we are able to build a new one. Let the conservative stand up for time-honored, and by that I never mean time-execrated, institutions and charters, and he deserves as well of his country as any other man who will make sacrifices for her, and defend and help her to the best of his power.

But in doing this on any side, one great trouble still is Gashmu. I will venture to say there is not a faithful man in politics to-day who has only the good of the nation at heart, and so will only go with his party when his party is right, who is not constantly tormented by Gashmu. One day he will slide a paragraph into a letter from the Capitol, another day he will put a barbed arrow into the shape of a local. Then you shall find him lurking in a leader, or in a speech in Congress. Gashmu in the nation breaks out everywhere, and if God did not intend to save us as a nation with a great salvation, to make our walls strong and sure in spite of him, and all that go in his company, Gashmu would be our ruin.

Now for all this there is the concluding admonition and encouragement. And this, first of all, is clear : with all his power and prestige, Gashmu came to nothing before this earnest steady builder of waste places, and found that Gashmu



said it, was no more avail to stop the building than a pewter spoon would have been to carry it on. It was common rumor and Gashmu on the one side, and God and the right on the other ; and, alas for Gashmu, when he is found fighting against God !

And so I would say to every earnest man and woman, keep true to your task, whatever it be, make your work as good as you can, put all you have into it, stand steadily by it, and never mind Gashmu. He may annoy you, he cannot hurt you ; he may hinder you, he cannot stop you. It is no matter what you may be doing,—if you are faithfully at work, trying to do good, there will be a Gashmu somewhere, who will say what he can against you. All you can do, and all you have to do, is to work on silently, and trust to God and never mind Gashmu.

Secondly, when Gashmu comes, and begins to say this and that to annoy you, do not come down to talk to him. If he wants to revile you, let him ; the day will be sure to declare which is right. Common report may say wheat is chaff, and Gashmu may confirm it, as he did about this honest Hebrew. But when the wheat is once cast into the ground, and the kindly earth folds it to her breast, and the sweet rains drop down from heaven upon it, and the sun wakens all the pulses of the summer about it, then you will see, “first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn,” and God will be true and Gashmu a liar.

Then, if you come across Gashmu in the church, or in society, or in any way whatever, keep out of his way as much as you can—have nothing to say to him. There are plenty of men and women, wherever you go, who will be glad to meet you and tell the truth, and let other people alone ; who will respect your nature in religion, and your character in life, and will never think to do the truth good service by a lie ; who will say to you, the church in which you can get and do the most good, is the best church, whatever be its name. No church can satisfy all. Gashmu has no more right to interfere with the church you shall go to than he has to interfere with the state you shall go to. And I venture to say that when this

is once accepted generally, in the church and out of it, Gashmu will be voted a nuisance, and put down.

Then let us take care that we are not as Gashmu. It is one of the most subtle and dangerous sins I know of. I do not know of any profession that is not guilty. Gashmus among ministers, merchants, lawyers, doctors, mechanics, and men generally, and women, too, are plenty as blackberries. I have seen him in all sorts of social parties. I have even imagined I detected him in the church meeting. The danger is, he is so plausible, and seems so right, so concerned for the good of Zion, that, like the old giant in the Pilgrim's Progress, he spoils young pilgrims with sophistry. Let all young pilgrims look out lest they fall into his snare, and become like him in his vile calling; and let them watch what weight there is to the word he says about the man or the thing he dislikes, for to be like Gashmu is to be one of the most pitiful and paltry of men.

Finally, we must pity Gashmu; for, after all, like all men who do wrong, he was finally the greater sufferer. There was, on that September morning, for all we know, a decent man who might rest, when his little life was ended, as quietly as his fathers were resting in the old Assyrian hills. Yet before night-fall he had said a few words that have impaled him on the lonely peak of twenty-two centuries, in an awful solitude, of warning to every man who will not consider the eternal sacredness of the words he may be saying about another, and their long and deep duration.

He told a lie, in his narrow prejudice, against a good man who was doing a good work for his country, his church, and his race, and now he can never rest. The Bible, that chains him fast to this everlasting damnation, has been sometimes almost lost out of the world, buried in seclusion, hidden in mountains, and caves, and dens. It has been found again, printed, translated into every tongue, and is read to-day, as the earth wheels round the sun, by untold millions of men and women. Wherever one holds a Bible, he can get at this story, how Gashmu lied when he could have told the truth, and is convicted before all the ages and all the angels; is the real Wandering Jew

unable to die. Need I say, then, do not try to be avenged on Gashmu. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord; I will repay. Surely there is no man who will not rest his course with God after such an example as this, and instead of the bitterness we all feel when we are so wronged by Gashmu, pity the hapless fate of the wrong-doers, and cry, as one cried who was wronged as we never can be—"Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

## VIII.

*Storming Heaven.*

LUKE xi. 5-10: "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and It shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

THE text, in connection with what precedes it, seems singular. When Jesus had been praying in a certain place, his disciples came to him, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray;" and he taught them the Lord's Prayer. But when he had done this, he goes on to speak to them in a parable that seems to cast a new light on some of these relations of man to God that are to be affected through this mysterious agency. For instead of representing the divine nature as so open and tremulous to our cry that it needs not even a whisper when we pray, but can hear our sighing and be stirred by our longing, it is opened to us here as if wrapped in a slumber heavy as midnight, and only to be awakened by our persistent and most urgent endeavor.

In all the words of the Messiah which we possess, there is but one other parable touching the same principle. It is where the widow comes, in her helplessness, to the unjust judge, who neither fears God nor regards man, and cries, "Avenge me of ~~my~~ adversary." He has no mind to listen to her cry; she

is the embodiment of all helplessness ; there is no eloquence in her words, no gift in her hands, and no reason in the world why he should attend to her, except her simple persistence in urging her claim ; but that carries the day against every obstacle. Her continual cry for what she has a right to seek has in it a touch of omnipotence ; so he gives that to importunity he would not give as a duty or a right.

The first feeling we have about the matter is, either that there has been some mistake in the way these parables are reported, or that it is hopeless for us to try to understand them. We say, this householder asleep at midnight ! What can this mean ? I think the meaning is that Jesus would teach us in this way what we are learning in many other ways—that the best things in the divine life, as in the natural, will not come to us merely for the asking ; that true prayer is the whole strength of the whole man going out after his needs, and the real secret of getting what you want in heaven, as on earth, lies in the fact that you give your whole heart for it, or you cannot adequately value it when you get it. So, “ Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and you shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you,” means Put out all your energies, as if you had to waken heaven out of a midnight slumber, or an indifference like that of the unjust judge.

This I conceive to have been the meaning of Christ in the parable ; and it touches something in our life we seldom adequately consider, namely, what I would call the indifference of God to anything less than the best there is in man—the determination of Heaven, if I may say so, not to hear what we are not determined Heaven shall hear. So calling out the faculty that lies hidden in our nature, to answer to another deep word of this great Teacher, “ The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force ;” and any adequate answer to our cry of, “ Let thy kingdom come,” must greatly lie in our power to bring in the kingdom.

We can see this principle at work, if we will, first in nature. It fills the whole distance between the paradise of the first pair and this common earth as we find it to-day. In that old Eden, there was no barrier between the longing and its answer, and

no effort needed to bring the answer, except the longing. The kindly, easy, effortless life went on, we suppose, as life might have gone on in the Sandwich Islands before Cook discovered them, had their inhabitants possessed the secret of how to live, in addition to their perfect climate, and the daily bread that came almost without the asking.

In this life of ours, however, there is no such answer to our natural cry for what we need. The need may be, in its way, divine, and the longing as divine as the need; but before they can come to their full fruition, barriers have to be broken down that seem to have been put there by Heaven itself. There is always a divine inertness and hinderance to be overcome before we can come to what is more divine than that which we possess.

I can remember nothing in my childhood, for instance, of a deeper interest than the stories I used to read of hapless travellers crossing the Alps, and being overtaken by the storm and lost, of their rescue by the great sagacious dogs and their masters, and their restoration to life; and the old interest was still so strong in 1865, that when I came to the foot of one of the great passes which I had no time to cross, I lingered about it with an almost tireless interest.

But I went to see also the new railroad they are making by a tunnel through Mount Cenis, that shall do away for ever with the hardship and danger of the passes over the mountains, and open up a new and living way between Switzerland and Italy. And there I caught, I think, the first hint of this barrier thrown up by Heaven across its own highways. For in spite of the bemoanings of Mr Ruskin about desecrating the holy shrines of these lakes and mountains with the scream of the locomotive, and the careless tread of the multitude on their cheap trip, I can imagine no comparison between such a road and the old track over their crests that does not prove the railroad the more heavenly way, in safety to life, in salvation from suffering, in economy of time, in closeness of intercourse, in facility for seeing whatever is most glorious on either side, in opening the pages of that poem of the world to the *million*, that until now has been closed to all but the few.

The railroad is beyond all comparison the better and diviner way.

But the moment the nations began to long for such a road, the barriers against it began to appear. The earth is the Lord's, and he made it ; but for such a railroad he made no provision beyond this,—that no man can touch or weigh or measure the determination of some men that there shall be one. "Let us have a railroad," they say ; and then they go to work, with the geometries that are a part of the order of the universe, to find the way. They trace it along the old natural levels, and it would seem as if they were made to be an answer to this prayer ; but then at last they come to the mountain, to the great inert divine hinderance, as immovable as the midnight slumber on the unwilling heart. "We want a railroad into Italy," cries the world, "and can go no farther for this mountain. What shall we do to find a way?" "There is no way," Heaven answers, "except to your persistency ; but if you seek, you shall find ; if you knock, it shall be opened to you." And so the seeking of the answer to that prayer of the nations is intrusted to the keen sight of men whose searching will never tire until the way is found. The knocking is with hard steel at the hard rock, and it is only a question of persistence and of endurance ; then at last it has come to pass that even the heart of the unwilling mountain is won, and its midnight sleep driven away ; and where for countless ages there has been only an utter and unutterable silence, there is now the mighty response of an answered prayer in the thunder of the locomotive.

We touch this principle again in a more personal way when we observe this striving in the experiences of men. Not to mention at this moment what is most purely spiritual in these conflicts, there is deep instruction in watching how some man is moved to do some thing that is to bless the world in a new and wonderful way when it is done ; but between the conception and the conclusion there are mighty barriers, that only the uttermost might of what is indeed a divine persistence can finally overcome. It flashes on the soul with something of the nature of a revelation when it is done. Men say he must have been inspired to do it. Its blessing is so clear

that we can almost see the shining track on which it has come from God to man. It would be natural to think then the way must be clear between the conception and execution of such a thing, not only because of the nobility of the thing itself, but of the urgent need of it among men. Yet the new child is still laid in the manger, and has to struggle in the long lapse between the birth and the baptism through the hinderance of its Nazareth, while the world must wait and want until all the barriers in the way of its coming are broken down.

How strikingly—to take what is right at our hand—this has been brought home to us in the wonderful history of the perfecting of India-rubber! Delicately winning its way into the most essential arts and uses of life, no mean agent in our new civilization, so indispensable is it, now we have learned its use, that if it should be suddenly taken away, it would leave a great gap in our commonwealth, and shorten the averages of human life. I know of nothing more impressive in the line of my thought than that long prayer, as I must call it, of the inventor, by which at last he won the unlistening heavens over to his side. With a faith in the thing he wanted to do, teachers of religion might well imitate; with as little care for the mere wealth that might come of his discovery as a man could well feel; consecrating every power and every penny he could command to the one great purpose; counted a madman by the sensible, easy-going world about him, that could neither feel the burden of his soul, nor win its reward,—the story of the way in which he persisted, year after year, in broken health and utter poverty, and what was worse than starvation for himself, in wrestling with the silent and seemingly dumb heavens for their revelations, is one of the most touching things in the history of our human life.

There was the blessing all the time hidden in the heart of Providence. What the thing is now with us, we cannot but believe it was then with God. But what the world believed in old time, as it dwelt within the shadows of a cruel superstition, still comes true to us, as we dwell in the clear daylight of the divine law,—that when a man will win some

mighty blessing for his fellow-men, the blessing can only come at the cost of his most precious blood: he must not grow weary; he must weary that which holds the secret. Let him give up his search too soon, let him knock too seldom, the householder will not rise; the bread will not be given. The only comfort there is,—and it is the only one we need,—is this, that when once a man casts his whole manhood into the thing God has stirred him up to seek, he never does knock too often; but if he must, he dies knocking, and then leaves another at the door.

They knocked more than two hundred years for the locomotive before the door was opened, and if you have read this history of Mr. Goodyear, to which I have referred, you will remember how at last the full revelation of the secret came in a flash, as when the diamond seeker watches for the sudden sheen of his treasure between the sand and the sun. But it was the eye that had been seeking patiently, persistently, and steadily through these long years that found the treasure, as when the apple fell; if we had been there, we should have seen an apple fall where Newton saw the whole order of the suns and stars, because he had been wearying heaven night and day for years to open her doors to his beseeching about that matter.

And if we leave these semi-material things, and consider what is, perhaps, more purely in the line of the parable, it is only to see still more certainly how certain is this matter of the unlistening ear and unwilling heart of Providence in the experiences of the noblest and best. The whole history of man, in his higher relations to God, is the history of a struggle through the most disheartening and perplexing hinderances into the light and life in which the soul so led can break the bread of life to others. The truth the man has to tell, he has first to win at a cost which leaves nothing else of any worth by comparison, and then his very life is cheerfully given, if need be, rather than the truth shall fail.

I will venture to say, there is not a supreme man of God, in any time, or race, or religion, whose power may not be understood better by this test than by any other we can find;



sent into the world, with the purpose he finally fulfils folded within his soul; inspired from above to enter on his work; sealed when his work is done, and set fast for ever among the prophets and apostles of the race, you shall always find that there is a time stretching often over a long span of years in which the man had to strive and pray, to weary Heaven by his incessant beseeching, until at last, perhaps, when it became a question with those who were aware of the contest, whether Heaven should hear or the man should die, the heart of the great secret is won, the angel says, "Thou shalt be called no longer Jacob, but Israel, because thou hast wrestled with God and prevailed;" and then, in the strength of his well-won blessing, he is for ever after set among the great ones of the world.

But the truth was as true before the man was born, as it is when he is like to die in his struggle to pluck it out of the silence in which it is hidden. Descartes and Kepler did not set the heavens in the order they almost died to discover; justification by faith was as true when Luther was singing his Christmas hymns as when he was worn away with the misery of his crying, "How shall man be just with God?" The loaves are there; the whole secret is in the winning, and in why they have to be so won, as the hills and valleys of Canaan were standing in the clear sunshine through all that forty years Israel was wading wearily through the desert towards them.

So, then, we come, through these illustrations of this principle in our life, to some lessons which we shall all do well to learn; and I cannot mention one before this: that instead of a prayer being something we can say easily at any time and be done with, can read out of a book, or have said for us by a minister,—in the most sacred and essential sense, a true prayer must be the deepest and most painful thing a man can possibly do; may be so costly that he will give up, without a murmur, his very life, before he will give up that which his prayer has wrested, as it were, out of the heart of the heavens; and it may be so protracted, that twenty years *shall not suffice* to see it.

For prayer, in its purest reality, is first the cry of the soul to God for his gift, and then it is the effort of the soul to make as sure of what it longs for, as if it were to come by its own winding. It is something in which the words we say are often of the smallest possible consequence, and only our unconquerable persistence under God is omnipotent. And that this longing and striving, as shadowed out in the parable, should be so painful and protracted, is only a wonder when we lose sight of the revelations made to us in almost every other direction.

I went once to see the Cathedral at Cologne. It is the most wonderful blossoming of Gothic art on the planet. Hundreds of years ago some man, now forgotten, found it all in his heart, and longed to make it visible in stone. But because it was so great and good, when the man died his work was still unfinished; it was still unfinished when his name was forgotten; at last, even the design of it was lost, and it seemed as if there was no hope that the Cathedral would ever be done. But when Napoleon went storming through Europe, his marshals lighted on the old design, hidden in some dusty corner of a monastery; so it got back again to Cologne, and when I was there, all Germany was interested in finishing the noble idea.

Now, since that church was begun, thousands of churches have risen and fallen in Germany, and no trace of them is left; but because the Dome Kirch is the grandest thing in its way that was ever done in stone, or ever conceived in a soul, two things follow: there must be a mighty span between the conception and the consummation, a striving through dark days and fearful hinderances to build it, and, at the same time, an indestructible vitality in the idea, like that which has attended it. It is but a shadow of this great fact concerning our spiritual life. The very worth of what we ask for from the heavens, because it is so worthy, is the deepest reason there is why the blessing cannot come until the full time—until it has had its own time.

It is, therefore, no reason why a man earnestly engaged in a true reform in the ideas or the conduct of life, should become disheartened, and think of giving up, when the thing, being in

his opinion a matter of such supreme importance to mankind, and so verily a truth of God, does not win its way more rapidly or receive more open marks of the divine favor, but has to labor under every possible disadvantage, and be as if the heart of Heaven was unwilling to recognize its claim. It is probable that in exact proportion to the worth of the thing will be the strife for the place it must finally take, and the work it must finally do; and this, not that Heaven is on the other side or indifferent, but it will make full proof of those who are to be intrusted with the mighty interest, and make the worth of the interest clear.

And so the principle I have noticed in the life of the reformer, is to be noticed also of every great reform; it has to wait, and work its way persistently through the most determined opposition; through times in which there is no encouragement at all, except that which is in the hearts of those who are devoted to it, who know right well if they ask, and seek, and knock, and do not tire, but keep right on, then, as sure as there is an eternal light, the wrong will be at last conquered, and Heaven will be won to give what they shall not be weary asking. Then, for reform and reformer alike, will come the answer to the prayer of the old apostle, "The God of all grace, who hath called you unto his eternal glory after that ye have suffered awhile, establish, strengthen, settle you, and make you perfect."

And so it must be with those reforms in which we take an interest in these days: the reform in religious ideas, by which we are all at last to come to the unity of spirit in the bond of peace; to one Lord, one faith, and one baptism: or the woman question, in which simple natural justice will take the place of the prescriptions and miserable unfairness of the old ages: or intemperance, in which the commonwealth is not now ashamed to be implicated in licensing what works more ruin than every other course of which we have any knowledge: or this labor question, in which, as yet, the one side is tyrant now, and then the other, and each seeks only its own; as if the relation between man and man was a great tumor of human selfishness. These and all other questions assuming in these days a vital importance are touched by the parable. In the long span that they

must take between the conception and the consummation, Heaven will seem to be dead to the cry of those that hold them in their hearts ; but they can be sure, as if victory had crowned their banners, that when the full time has come, then will come the full answer to their cry, and not one grain of what is locked fast in God's truth and righteousness of the thing they strive for can ever be lost out of the good endeavor.

So, once more, when we remember that this life each man and woman is living, is to the liver by far the most precious thing he can have to do with ; how its experiences, lessons, and results enter into the very substance of the soul ; we must not wonder if some things we have at heart do not come to pass so readily as we may think they ought, being so surely the gift of Heaven, but lag and linger after all our longing, and the endeavor which is in itself a prayer, as if Heaven is determined indeed we shall not have them, or is deaf to our cry. It is possible in the light of the lessons I have tried to draw, not from the parable alone, but from the deep and constant facts of life that come up and range themselves about the parable, that the very magnitude and worth of the thing we want may be the reason why it is delayed, as well as that the things which come into our possession in waiting for it and striving for it, are quite as good to have and to hold as the thing itself.

The young man strives for what we call success in life ; by which we mean, too often, money enough to be independent of any of those surprises of a good Providence which always fall to the lot of the poor, earnest, struggling man, and a position in which he can stand, as nearly as possible, like to the golden image the king set up in the plains of Dura. But let it be a real success the young man aims at—the success of being most useful and powerful for good ; the thing he seeks may still be delayed by its very magnitude and excellence.

There is a fine illustration of this in one notable family that sprang up not far from the place where I was born. Long ago the fore-elders were small farmers, but four generations back the man of that time began to feel after a better place—to knock at the door of heaven for a rise. When he died he

had a little spinning interest and a well-grown son who built up, bit by bit, through a long life and many hard fortunes, the idea he had derived from his father. In the third generation the effort had come to be a splendid success, and in the fourth it culminated, probably, in a man who with wealth and education had a noble native power that had been growing gradually ever since that great grandsire felt moved to knock and ask for something better than to cultivate a hungry Lancashire upland. This man in his day rendered a service to England second to none. He was

"The statesman in the council set,  
Who knew the seasons, when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet."

And so, I think, if the eldest of all, in his grim struggle to get the blessing of success—for a real, healthy success is a blessing—could have seen the youngest standing at the helm, and guiding the ship of state through some of her most dangerous passages, and then could have seen how the great qualities that made him so eminent had not come by a mere chance, but were intimately interlocked with all the good fights the whole ancestry had fought against what seemed to them often to be an inert or unwilling Providence, he would have been satisfied that this whole four-fold life, being in a deep sense also one life, should be perfected in this Sir Robert.

So, if God visits the sins, he also visits the holiness, of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. Let no man, therefore, striving hard to succeed, but held back by hinderance, conclude that a poor mite of this world's wealth is all that he is to get out of the endeavor. It is as certain as anything can be, that one or more of those children about his knees, who already know something of his heart-sickness, are feeling afresh the power to knock which may be failing in himself, and what he cannot give them in a banker's balance, will still come to them in a wealth that is infinitely better,—the wealth of a clear head, and a strong heart, and a divine persistence in seeking what it is his hunger and thirst to find.

My heart would be heavy, sometimes, did I not believe that my own good father, whose utmost endeavor could never carry him beyond the anvil,—at which he fell down dead from overwork many years ago,—is aware, as he abides in the rest that remains for all weary men and women, how the children for whom he cared, and wrought, and died, had come into possession of what is better than the money he could never save,—the life, good and true he lived for their sakes, and gave for their blessing.

It is to me one of the most cruel and inhuman things that is ever done, to make a man an outcast from Christian society and sympathy, who, sincerely seeking to know the truth about God, and the soul, and immortal life, still has to tell us he cannot believe it; that, after all he can do, these things are all in the dark, the doors will not open, the treasure is still hidden away, the gift of God still held back after all his knocking and cries. The time will come, as the Lord liveth, when such men and women will command the deepest sympathy and tenderness religion has to give. When, instead of the church casting them out beyond her borders, she will gather them into her very heart; will learn what this meant which her great Captain said, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

It is not so now; and yet to men and women with such doubts, I say, the very magnitude and worth of the thing you are seeking may well be the deepest reason why you shall not soon find it, but shall be led still to seek, and struggle, and cry, and watch those that are satisfied, and to say, "I would give the world if I could feel as they could do." It may well be that your prayer for the revelation you need will span your whole lifetime; that now and then there will be a flash, and then again the dark; yet what you come to in this seeking, is a treasure you could not come to in the finding.

"You make the larger faith your own:  
The power is with you in the night  
That makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone."

It is only and altogether essential that we shall be sure the treasure is *there*; that this is no delusion, which has come

sweeping through human souls in floods of living light, filling them with joy unspeakable and full of glory, bringing God so near that they have instinctively called him Father ; so informing them of heaven, that it never occurred to them any one could doubt it ; quickening the soul so with the sense of her immortality, that she would soar and sing immortal songs out of her heart's treasure, and nerve her poor organism to meet the axe, or cross, or flame, as quietly as if it was but the pleasant prelude to her rest. You must believe, struggling, doubting, seeking, beseeching man or woman that the door opened to them will be opened to you. They found the gift you are seeking ; the silent heavens heard them at last, and gave them all they sought.

Only this one thing we must never disbelieve. Let us say we cannot believe in God, or heaven, or immortality ourselves, if that indeed be the condition of our own souls. It cannot be wrong to tell the truth ; and if this be the truth in our religious experience, that the householder has not risen to give us bread, it is a simple fact, and to tell it, if I feel I must, is honest and manful ; but it is a wretched thing to assail that great multitude no man can number, who through all the ages have compelled Heaven to hear their cries, have eaten the bread of life and are satisfied, who do believe in God and immortality, and have left a broad, shining track that can never grow dim.

The uttermost woe that can come to a man from this direction, is not the inability he feels in himself to find these mighty confidences, but the inability to believe they have ever been found ; that the householder has ever risen to give bread to any soul. It is ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, when I make my own destitution the measure of the fulness of the gospel of God. It is as foolish of me to do that, as it would be for a blind man to turn his blank orbs to the June glory, and say, "I see all there is." Let me still rest in this solid certainty, that multitudes, through all the ages, have succeeded, where I have failed ; winning the bread I hunger for ; finding the answer denied to my cry ; the answer that I shall surely find in *the fulness of time or eternity.* Amen.

## IX.

## Why Herod feared John.

MARK vi. 20: "Herod feared John."

HEROD was a king; John was a subject. Herod was in a palace; John was in a prison. Herod wore a crown; John most probably did not even own a turban. Herod wore the purple; John wore camlet, as we should call it. Soldiers and servants watched the eye of Herod, and waited on his will; only the headsman waited hungrily for John. Herod came of a line that had never been famous either for morals or religion: they said, practically what a famous American long afterwards said verbally, "that religion is a very good thing in its place;" they had done their best to establish a government in which the old Jewish worship should serve as a decoy duck to the new Jewish kingdom; they made it what the State forever makes the Church when it gets the chance—a fountain of preferment, with which it can bribe or buy the upper, and a mystic spell by which it can weave fetters of superstition for the lower, classes; and up to this time the dynasty had succeeded substantially in doing what it proposed to do. Yet still "Herod feared John."

Herod, the elder, father of this Herod Antipas who feared John, was a man of notable power. Appointed over Judea by Julius Cæsar, about forty-seven years before our Christian era, he fought his way through invasion from without and treachery from within, until he had at last established the throne on what seemed, for those times, to be deep foundations. He was what one might call an Eclectic in religion. When he ascended the throne, he made offerings to Jupiter of the capitol; his coins, as well as those of his son, bear only Greek inscriptions. Yet he rebuilt the temple at Jerusalem in a style of magnificence surpassing even that of Solomon. But then he built a temple for the Samaritans, too; and, indeed, was a man full of politeness—a sort of human Pantheon, in which Greek and Roman, Jew and Samaritan, were welcome to set up their symbols,—for which he cared no more than if he himself had been so much



marble; and finally, so far as we can trace him, he left his principles and his kingdom, in the full prime of their strength, to his son.

John was the son of an obscure Jewish country priest and his wife: the child of their old age. There is no hint that John had any wealth, or name, or fame, or education, or influence, when he began his life as a man. He comes on the scene as a rough, angular man, with not many words and not many friends. Herod began to reign just about when John began to live, so that there was no preponderant age in the priest's son over the king's son: that was all on the other side.

Indeed, by all mere surface facts, principles, and analogies, John ought to have feared Herod; he ought to have bated his breath and bent his head before him. John's life was not worth thirty minutes' purchase, if Herod did but give the sign to kill him. And John knew that, and Herod knew it too. Yet they rise up like ghosts before us out of that distant time—the king in the palace, the reformer in the prison; the king with the sceptre in his hand, the reformer with the shackle on his wrist. But the eye of the prisoner burns with a clear lustre, and looks right on; the eye of the king quails under its drooping lid. The hand of the prisoner is cool, and his foot firm; his head erect, and his voice clear as the voice of a trumpet. The hand of the king is hot, his step uncertain, his head bowed, and his voice broken, and, as you watch them, you get a great sense that the two men have somehow changed places—the king is a prisoner, the prisoner a king.

Now, I propose to discuss at this time the roots of this power and weakness, to see what made Herod so weak and John so strong, and to ask this question, What can we, who are set as John was, in the advance guard of reformers, do to make a deep, clear mark?

And I note for you that John had three great roots of power: First, he was a powerful man by creation—a man with a clear head, a steady nerve, and a nature set in a deadly antagonism to sin and meanness of every sort and degree. He was the Jewish John Knox, or John Brown.

*“When he saw a thing was true,  
He went to work and put it through.”*

He could die, but he could not back down. Now, truly, there is a sure and solid principle at the heart of these old chronicles that tell us how angels came as messengers from God to notify the world of the advent of his most glorious sons ; that when God wants a particular sort of man, to do a singular work for him, at a critical time, he makes him, and sends him, angel-guarded, to his place ; so that no man can be John, but John himself.

Every time I meet a man who is a man, and not a stick, I ask myself one question : " Why are you the man you are ? Whence does your power hint itself to me ? Whence does it come." And while the ultimate answer has never come out of Phrenology or Physiognomy, or any of the sciences that profess to tell you what a man is by how he looks, yet the indicative answer has always lain in that direction. In the head, and face, and form of a man there is certainly something that impresses you in some such way as the weight, color, and inscription of a coin reveal to you, with a fair certainty, whether it be gold, or silver, or—brass ; and it is possible, too, that the line in which a man has descended, the country in which he is born, the climate, the scenery, the history, the poetry, and the society about him, have a great deal to do with the man.

The father, in Queen Elizabeth's time, as I have known in old English families, may be twenty-two carat gold ; and the children in Queen Victoria's time may be no better than lead. That mysterious antagonism that sows tares among the wheat, sows baseness in the blood ; and if there be not for ever a careful and most painful dividing and burning, the tares will in time come to nearly all there is on the soil. But still for ever the great mint of Providence beats on, silently, certainly, continually, sending its own new golden coins to circulate through our human life, and on each of them stamping the infallible image and superscription that tells us " this is gold." Nay, the same great Providence makes not only gold coins, but silver and iron too ; and if they are true to their ring, they are all divine ; as in all great houses there be divers vessels, some to more honor

and some to less honor, but not one to dishonor if it be true to its purpose ; for while the golden vase that holds the wine at the feast of a king is a vessel of honor, so is the iron pot that holds the meat in the furnace ; the Parian vase that you fill with flowers is a vessel of honor, and so is the tin dipper with which you fill it at the well.

For me, it is a wonderful thing to study merely the pictures of great men. There is a power in the very shadow that makes you feel they were born to be kings and priests unto God. But if you know a great man personally, you find a power in him which the picture can never give you. It is the difference between the picture of a tree and a tree, or between paste and jewels ; and as you try to reach back to first principles, to search out the reason why he is what he is,—as you search for it in the sciences I have mentioned, and in family descent, and in climate, and scenery, and society,—though these all hint some truth to us, they are at the best only as the figures and pointers on the dial. Their utmost use is to mark the movement within ; and that movement is worthless, if it be not chorded with the sun and stars. And so, too, I love those old, solemn, primitive affirmations that make the outward of the best men but indicative of the inward, and that again a transcript of the mind of God. So I care little for our birth and breeding, if there is this purpose of God, that we shall be genuine in our most nature.

I suppose this good Jewish country parson, the Father of John, from the little we can glean about him, was just a gentle, timid, pious, retiring man, whose mind had never risen above the routine of his humble post in the temple ; a man who would have talked for a week, or a month, or a year about some little courtesy Herod had shown him ; a man devoted to the priesthood, just as the Father of Franklin, in this old town of Boston, was to the making of candles, or Luther's father in Germany to the making of charcoal, or Shakespeare's to the selling of oxen at Stratford, or Johnson's of books—good, true men, iron, copper, or silver, and bidding fair to raise a family that is iron, or copper, or silver, too. But lo ! God, in the full

time, drops just one golden ingot down into that family treasury, pure, ponderous, solid gold ; for

“ It is the growing soul within the man  
That makes the man grow :  
Just as the fiery sap the touch from God  
Careering through a tree dilates the bark,  
So life deepening within us deepens all.”

Yet I need not tell you that there is a theory of human nature that busies itself for ever in trying to prove that our human nature in itself is abominably and naturally despicable. Towards their fellow-men, the holders of this idea are as particular about their character and standing as the rest of us. They shall rise from their prayers, in which they have called themselves twenty hard names, and if you repeat over but one of them, instantly they are offended. Towards us, they are as particular upon points of honor as a Spaniard. Towards God, they turn with not one shred of self-respect—“ they like to be despised.” They insist upon it that God never cast a golden coin into this world at all—that our common human nature is nothing but base metal, with awful chances that it will ever be aught else—that if saved, then saved by transmutation—if lost, then lost because, though the Almighty considered them worth making, he did not consider them worth transmuting.

There are two replies to this theory. The first is found in that good story you have all read in a lately printed book. “ Janet,” said the minister, “ there is really nothing in you that is at all worthy of salvation. Now, suppose God, at the last, should let you drop into hell. What would you say to that ;” Janet was on her death-bed. She had been all her life in this dark shadow of a possible predestination to the pit. But she had lain still in her room, in this sickness, a long time, and her soul had caught, now and again, with great distinctive vividness, a flash of the Eternal Light that at these times touches the soul from the land where the Lord God is the Sun. “ Minister,” Janet said, quietly, “ I have thought it all over. I believe God will do with me just whatever he has a mind to do. I cannot tell what he will do. But this I know ; he made me ;

I am the work of his hands ; and if he puts me down into hell, he will lose more by doing it than I shall by bearing it." The second reply is embodied in the fact, that God does in all times and places send golden men into this world. Gold is the mine, it may be ; or gold and sand and mica—gold that needs to be pounded, and melted, and purified by fire ; but still, at the heart of all, real gold,—gold by creation, and not by transmutation,—needing only what it finds in God and in life to bring it out into full perfection.

Now, this primitive intrinsic nature, I say, was the first element that made John mightier in the prison than Herod was in the palace. The one was a king by creation ; the other was only a king by descent. And then, secondly, there comes into the difference another element. Herod made the purple vile by his sin ; John made the camel's hair radiant by his holiness. And in that personal truth, this rightwiseness, this wholeness, he gained every divine force in the universe over to his side, and left to Herod only the infernal forces. It was a question of power, reaching back ultimately, as all such questions do, to God and the devil. So the fetter was turned to a sceptre, and the sceptre to a fetter, and the soul of the Sybarite quailed, and went down before the soul of the saint.

Now this, as we enter into his spirit and life, is what comes home to us with the most invincible power and clearness. We weigh the hints of those old writers about John, and gather from them that he was intrinsically sound, from the outermost surface to the innermost centre of his life. Whatever error he might make in being hard and insensible to the beauty and glory, the more tender and lovable aspects of life, his life, as he got it, was a whole life. There are not many men in this world who begin life determined to be sinful. The set of our determination is the other way. I think God takes care that every young man shall get flashes of the beauty of holiness, and of the ghastliness of sin ; and that no man will quietly determine to break away from that passable beauty, with no hope of getting back again. But a great number of young men begin to sin spasmodically. They drink the waters of sin, as *the dog in Egypt* is said to drink of the Nile. Being in a whole-

some fear of some lurking crocodile, he just laps a little, and then runs a little, and so keeps on lapping and running, until he is either satisfied or snapped up.

Then there is a second class of men, who start in life determined to go right on, and to do just about right. And they do seem to go right on ; yet still, when they themselves measure their track by long distances, there is a shadow of deflection. They are conscious of bearing a little to the left. They are not in the direct line in which they started. While no one step seems to be more than a hair's breadth out of the true line, and one earnest moment every day, one careful observation by the Eternal Sun, would put them right, yet they do not take it. It is easier sailing as it is. When the Indian, on the great prairies of the Far West, goes out to hunt the wild horse, and the horse, seeing him come, shakes his main, and gallops with the fleetness of the wind, he never follows directly in the track of the animal he is after, for he knows it will be hopeless trying to overtake him that way. But he simply observes the almost insensible deflection of his victim from the true line, and he knows that the horse is sure to keep on that side of the line. So he crosses the arc of flight, as the string crosses the bow, with the certainty of meeting his victim at the point of attachment, though he may never see him for fifty miles. So sin and retribution are victim and victor ! So the line of deflection becomes itself the guide to retribution ! All day long the wrong-doer sees only the boundless landscape, and speeds along, rejoicing in the vast latitudes of freedom ; but at sunset his neck is in the lasso, and he is led captive by the devil at his will.

Then the good man, the true, upright, downright man of power, goes right on to the mark. Let me tell you a story given me by the late venerable James Mott, of Philadelphia, whose uncle, fifty years ago, discovered the island in the Pacific inhabited by Adams and his companions, as you have read in the story of "The Mutiny of the Bounty." I was talking with him one day about it, and he said that, after staying at the island for some time, his uncle turned his vessel homeward, and steered directly for Boston,—sailing as he did from your own

good city,—eight thousand miles distant. Month after month the brave craft ploughed through storm and shine, keeping her head ever homewards. But as she came near home, she got into a thick fog, and seemed to be sailing by guess. The captain had never sighted land from the time they started; but one night he said to the crew, “Now, boys, lay her to! I reckon Boston harbor must be just over there somewhere; but we must wait for the fog to clear up before we try to run in.” And so, sure enough, when the morning sun rose it lifted the fog, and right over against them were the spires and homes of the great city of Boston! So can men go right onward over this great sea of life. The chart and compass are with them; and the power is with them to observe the meridian sun and the eternal stars. Storms will drive them, currents will drift them, dangers will beset them; they will long for more solid certainties; but by noon and by night they will drive right on, correcting deflections, resisting adverse influences, and then, at the last, when they are near home, they will know it. The darkness may be all about them, but the soul shines in its confidence; and the true mariner will say to his soul, “I will wait for the mist to rise with the new morning; I know home is just over there.” Then in the morning he is satisfied; he wakes to see the golden light on temple and home. So God brings him to the desired haven.

Now John was one of those right-on men. With the sort of power, above all others, to be ruined if any suspicion of impurity could be made to cling to his name, living in a community where any handle for such suspicion would be hailed as a providence to destroy his influence, he held on in his own severely pure, strong life, from the country parsonage to the block; and the most malicious in all Jewry never whispered the possibility of a stain. Had there been a crevice in John's armor, Herod would have found it out and laughed at him; but in the presence of that pure life, that deep, conscious antagonism to sin, that masterful power, won as a soldier wins a hard battle, this man on the throne was abased before that man in the prison. Herod could muster courage to face a partial purity; but a whole man was to him what the spear of the angel was to the vile thing

whispering at the ear of the first mother. It changed the possible fitness of nature into the positive deformity of hell. Therefore Herod feared John.

Then the third root of power in this great man, by which he mastered a king,—by which he became a king,—lay in the fact that he was a true, clear, unflinching, outspoken preacher of holiness. There are diverse ways of trying to reach the soul that has sunk down into sin and sensualism, as this soul of Herod had sunk. Some preachers reflect the great verities of religion, as bad boys reflect the sun from bits of broken glass. They stand just on one side, and flash a blaze of fierce light across the eyes of their victim, and leave him more bewildered and irritated than he was before. Such a one is your fitful, changing *doctrinaire*, whose ideas of right and wrong, or sin and holiness, of God and the devil, to-day, are not at all as they were last Sunday; who holds not that blessed thing, an ever-changing, because an ever-growing and ripening faith, but a mere sand-hill of bewilderment, liable to be blown anywhere by the next great storm. Then there is another sort of preacher, who is like the red light at the head of a railway night train. He is made for warning; he comes to tell of danger. That is the work of his life. When he is not doing that, he has nothing to do. I hear friends at times question whether this man has a divine mission. Surely, if there be danger to the soul,—and that question is not yet decided in the negative,—then he has to the inner life a mission as divine as that of the red lamp to the outer life. And I know myself of men who have turned sharp out of the track before his fierce glare, who, but for him, had been run down, and into a disgraceful grave. But the true preacher of holiness, the real forerunner of Christ, is the man who holds up in himself the divine truth, as a true mirror holds the light, so that whoever comes to him, will see his own character just as it is.

Such a man was this who mastered a king. His soul was never distorted by the traditions of the elders, or the habits of "good society," as it is called. On the broad clear surface of his soul, as on a pure still lake, you saw things as if in a great deep. He had no broken lights, for he held fast to his own primitive nature, and to his own direct inspiration. He did



not need much lurid fire, though he used it sometimes ; but he was essentially a child of the day, and realities shone when he stood near them. Men needed but to come near him, and they saw just what they were. And so, as he stood by the Jordan, crying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," the merchant came, and went away resolving to rectify that false entry at the customs ; the farmer went home and shifted the old landmark back again, so as to restore the few inches he had cribbed so cunningly the week before last ; the soldier determined to pay that widow for her care ; the publican said to himself, "From this time forth I will take a true tax, and no more, as the Lord liveth ;" and Herod came, as the English queen came to the mirror when all her beauty was turned to ashes, and the sight was an intolerable horror to his soul, so that he could bear to look no more. Had John held only the broken lights of mere optimism before the soul of this simple king, or come to him with a message deriving its power from the last readings of the Talmud, or even the Prophets, Herod would have snapped his fingers in his face and laughed him to scorn. But there stood the man as God made him—deep, calm, pure, clear ; touching in his earnest words the roots of things ; saying honestly, "Herod, this deed about thy brother's wife is a piece of vileness ! Thou shalt not take her !" So, though he still cleaved to his sin, Herod saw his soul as the queen saw her face scarred and netted with bad passions, and he was terrified at the vision of himself.

I tell you it is no matter what you may come to be, as the result of your true and honest life. Men may revile you, and cast you out ; but through it all, if you are true to God you shall feel that there is a life of the soul that pales all other in its exceeding glory. John may be in the prison, with his poor garment of camel's hair, and with the headsman waiting for him outside ; but he is blessed beyond all telling, compared with Herod in the palace, with slaves to watch his merest nod. For the one has even now breaking upon his soul the glory from that great city where the Lord God is the light ; the thick walls of cloud are already lifting before the morning sun ; he knows *the home* lies just over there. But the other has only a leap in

the dark, after a life in the dark, with dark faces in the dark all about him. My friends, endure hardship like good soldiers. Ye shall reap your reward.

## X.

## Marriage.

THE most sacred relation of humanity is that of husband and wife. They stand for more than father and mother, or parents and children, because they are the fountain from which these relations spring ; and, changing the mere man and woman into these sacred names, makes that a glory which were otherwise a shame.

According to the Bible, it is a relation as old as our human history ; and nothing outside of the Bible, that I know of, contradicts this testimony. Other old books cast the matter into other forms, as they themselves are the product of other races ; but the whole story looks like this, when it is told, that in the beginning the divine power made man and woman, and set them on the throne of the world, and gave them from the first the grace to be husband and wife, to find in each other the counterpart and completion of their own being.

While the creation over which they were given dominion followed its special instinct, and sought its lair or made its nest, there brought forth its young, and before another spring knew them for its own no more than if they were on another continent, this husband and wife made them a home, reared a family, were steadfast not for a few months, but for a lifetime, to those that were born of their body ; sent them out in due time, to do as they had done, but still counted them and their children as an intimate belonging of the old homestead ; and so this human race has never evened itself with the beasts that perish, except as it has become lower and worse. It is husband and wife wherever you find them—he the weapon man and she the web-man, as the old Anglo-Saxon Bible translates those words of Jesus, where he says, “Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning

made male and female—he the weapon-man, she the web-man ; he the defender, and she the clothier ; he the warrior, and she the weaver ; each indispensable to the other, and both indispensable to the whole.”

The divine alchemy, if I may use the word, that transmutes the man and woman into husband and wife, is marriage. It always has been so, and no doubt always will be. The observance of marriage as a ceremony is a very different thing in different countries and times, ranging all the way from the custom of the Australian black, who beats the maiden he will take until she is insensible, and then carries her off to his hut, to the pure and simple ceremonial used in the best Protestant communions. In the grossest savagery, marriage is, as a rule, as rude and brutal as possible. As we rise in the true scale of life it takes a nobler and better form, and on the summits of life it is a sacrament, and the most awful sacrament, perhaps, we can ever take, and the most certain, if we take it unworthily, to bring damnation. But from the rudest and most brutal savage, to the truest American, marriage,—the loftiest and best, as I believe, on the planet,—it is always, in some sense, the same thing that is done in this union. It turns the man and woman into husband and wife, creates the beginning of a home, insures a true and welcome identity between parents and offspring, binds life together between one generation and another, and out of the kingdom of Nature helps to bring the kingdom of God. “For marriage,” Bishop Taylor says, “like the bee, builds a house, and gathers sweetness, labors, and unites into societies and republics, keeps order, exercises many virtues, promotes the general interest of mankind, and is that state of good to which God has designed the present constitution of the world.”

Marriage is a divine institution, because there is a divine reason for it in our life. So, when Jesus said, “A man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one. What God, therefore, hath joined together, let no man put asunder ;” it was the sequel and conclusion to what he had said a moment before, that God had made it so in the beginning. A true marriage is, therefore, always

a religious act in itself, because religion means the binding of one to another, whether it be on earth or in heaven, in a true and pure union. So the Scriptures never command this relation ; they only recognize, and bless, and guard it. Everything seems to be settled once for all, from their own beautiful and holy vision of it, when the man wakes before the fall, sees the woman that God has brought to him, recognizes her as a part of his very self, takes her to his heart, and God is there as the witness, and blesses them.

Marriage, in the Bible, stands forth as a divine fact, rather than a divine commandment : it is intimately one with our creation. The blessing of God is already within that on which the minister calls the blessing of God to descend. To a true wedding of two human souls and lives nothing can be added but religious ceremonial and the proper social safeguards. The man and woman, in a true wedding, become husband and wife, because their Creator made them for each other, just as much as he made Adam and Eve for each other, and brought them face to face, as he did in Eden. And so when it is really true to those who take part in it, the good old-fashioned Quaker wedding is nearest the truth of God, in which the man and woman declare, as the ground of their union, that they have been moved to this deed by the Holy Spirit. That declaration not only brings the Lord to the marriage, but makes him also the match-maker ; and it must be for this cause, in its measure, that so large a proportion of the Quaker matches turn out well. But every true match is made in heaven ; and all true men and women who believe this, and act on it, find something of heaven in their match ; so that John Brown of Haddington was not so far wrong when he felt the time had come for him to enter the holy estate, and that he had seen the woman the Lord had made to be his wife, and went to tell her so ; and the good soul knew what he had come about, and was just as sure as he was that she was meant for him, and he for her. Yet he said, "My dear madam, you know what I am going to say ; but, if you please, before I say it, we will ask a blessing." And that was what they did.

It is the experience of all times, and no doubt of all peoples, that men and women are made for each other, to be husband and wife, and are very often brought together by a providence they cannot account for, and they can never be separated in their souls any more. A young man goes into a room of an evening, with a heart as free as an unmated swallow, and comes out of it sixty minutes after a captive for life ; and the maiden knows what the youth knows, and in her heart says amen to the revelation, though it may take her some time to say it with her lips. I have a friend, a man of great intelligence, who told me that when he was in the middle of the Pacific on a voyage, he saw a face in a dream, and it was borne in upon him that this was the face of his wife. He went through many adventures after that, was away about seven years, came back, went home, went to a quarterly Quaker meeting in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and there saw in a Quaker bonnet, for the first time with his human eyes, the face he had seen in his dream. The maiden became his wife ; and I never saw a happier pair on the earth, or a sweeter home or children ; and I have no doubt of the perfect truth of the story. All true marriages are made in heaven.

“ All true love is blessed with reverence,  
As heavenly light is blessed with heavenly blue.”

Any true observation of the life we are living will bring the assurance that marriages of this sort are by no means so few as cynics and satirists would like us to infer. If from thirty to forty years of intimate observation, in two widely separate sections of society,—two worlds, and the intimacy of a minister beside,—can be of service in forming an opinion, it is mine that a great preponderance of the men and women who become husbands and wives, find their helpmates, their matches, the one human being they need to make up the full measure, so far, of their life, in the man or woman they marry.

It is probable they may not find what I may call their ideal man or woman—the wonderful person the romances can make so much better than the Lord of life makes us, as the pictures *in a fashion* plate are finer than the portraits of the masters.

When we form our taste on this sort of standard, we are likely to be disappointed, and ought to be.

It is possible, too, for many reasons, that in the truest match which the Lord himself can make, there will be times when the husband and wife cannot see eye to eye, or make one music of the bass and alto in which they plighted their troth. It is extremely probable if a man cannot always feel satisfied with himself before he is married, he will not always feel satisfied with his wife after ; and if she sometimes charges herself with folly when she is a maiden, she may do the same now and then by her husband when she is a wife. If my self-love cannot hide or extenuate what is wrong in myself always, it must be a very tender, and holy, and everlasting love that will steadily overlook what may be wrong in another that I only love as well as myself. I know of nothing in the structure of this universe, or in life, or in the Bible, that can bear me out in the idea that a doubled possibility of happiness, in the addition of another life to mine, ought not to bring just that much more trial also : twice the felicity implies twice the infelicity in every other direction. The most exquisite organization is always exposed to the most appalling pain.

This possibility of falling out is in some way to be expected then ; in what way, we cannot well foresee, and it is not best we should. It may be health, or temper, or habit—it is no matter ; there must be trial of our faith in each other, as there is of our faith in God, and some doubt now and then of each other's love, as there is now and then of the diviner love of Heaven. No man or woman has any business to enter into this intimate oneness of life and soul without such an expectation. When the lark soars and sings over a mountain tarn, his shadow is as deep in the water as his soaring is high in heaven. Wise old Bishop Taylor says, "Marriage has in it less of beauty than a single life, but more of safety. It is more merry, but also more sad. It is fuller of joy, but also of sorrow. It lies under more burdens, but is supported by the strength of love, so that these burdens become delightful."

Something like that is to be expected in the very nature

of things ; it is to be found as the shadow cast by the truest and purest light that ever shines in a home. The sweetest wife that ever lived has said things to her husband scores of times that she would allow no other human being to say about him, or, once for all, that third person must hear a piece of her mind, if it were in a prayer meeting ; and the truest husband will now and then make his will known to his wife in tones so imperious, that, if he heard another utter them to the same woman, it would bring him leaping, like a leopard, at the scoundrel who dared to speak so to the mother of his children.

“Jack,” we said to our journeyman when he had been down home once, “Jack, what is the matter with thy head?” “Going past such a cottage,” Jack said sheepishly, “I heard the woman scream. I knew he was not over good to her, and I thought that was too bad. So I rushed in, and got hold of him, and was trying to get him down, and then the wife hit me.”

It was an illustration, from a range of life among the Yorkshire hills, that was little better, thirty years ago, than savage, of a principle that holds good in the sweetest and best of the land, where the uttermost hurt is a sharp word that is repented of and forgiven the moment it is spoken. Husbands and wives, when they are wise, understand and act up to it, as the condition of being what they are, and bear and forbear within all fair lines and limits.

With these elements in marriages, and forming a part of their very structure, my observation convinces me that the true match is the rule. In the overwhelming majority of instances, those that came to be husband and wife were made to be husband and wife. Very often in the face of our sins and follies, by the tender mercy of God, and not at all by our deserving, the great gift is given that makes a heaven for us where sometimes we would have made perdition for ourselves ; and sometimes the blessed life comes of honor and truth, life-long, in those that are made one in it ; but to believe that disappointment and misery come of the majority of marriages, is like believing that in this world the devil has dominion over most

John and Mary sit in their home, and wonder how Thomas and Susan manage to make so brave a show of their small stock of esteem. Thomas and Susan shake their heads now and then about John and Mary. But you find that somehow within it all there is better with the worse, as there is worse with the better. Very tender and true are they all when sickness smites them; very sorely they weep together over little graves. And then, if they must part, and one goes to the long home and one stays in this, whatever they, who are left to mend the poor broken life, may do, is well done, if they do it modestly and truly, and it has the blessing of the Risen One upon it. But then, in that case, it is always one more in a heart made larger to hold one more, never one cast out to make way for another. The match made in heaven is never unmade.

It is quite true, however, that with all this, there is a great deal of trouble in this land of ours, not to speak just now of other lands, rising directly out of this relation of husband and wife—trouble that does not lie, or cannot be brought within the lines I have tried to draw, but breaks out and flames up before the world, draws the attention sometimes of a community, and sometimes of a nation, connects itself not seldom with some dreadful tragedy, and compels us to ask what we can be coming to, and whether there is not to be a complete disruption of the old social order,—liberty running into license, love driven from her throne by lust, and this new land of promise put to shame, and brought to ruin by the vileness that destroyed the old.

It is very clear that here is something for all of us to ponder who have children coming up, who must take their chance with this growing trouble; may be smitten by it as certainly as other people's children are smitten now,—God pity them; or whether we have children or not, for all of us who love their land, and nation, and God and his truth, and the commonwealth of the world. It is natural, and must be useful, I think, to try to find where the reason lies for these appalling evils, that do not merely threaten us, but are on us; and whether plain and well-meaning people can use these reasons, either for prevention or cure, or what cure there may be for this great trouble that seems to grow and spread as we are *looking at it*.



Is it not possible for a man and woman to make sure when they marry that they are to be true husband and wife at the cost of the usual pains and penalties that will always insist on their own payment, and ought never to be thought unreasonable? Is it not possible to make this natural and beautiful law of our life all but universal, that for the man there is a woman, and for the woman a man, who will be a true counterpart? and that they shall know it, or else know they can never marry, because, without that, the license and minister's blessing are the merest farce that was ever acted. I cannot but believe there is such a safeguard—a true light, that lighteth every man who will follow it—about this, as there is about truth, and honesty, and justice, and honor. I believe we can hardly make a mistake, except we insist on doing it, about this most essential thing in our whole career. When marriage brings misery, as a rule, it is not by providence, but by improvidence, and we suffer in that for our sin very often in something else.

And I would venture to name this as the first reason why, troubles come that can never be fairly met, and very worthy men and women get so badly mismated,—that the whole habit now of young people, as they see each other with any thought of ever being husband and wife, is the habit of semi-deception. They set themselves to deceive the very elect, by always putting on an appearance, when they are in each other's company, that is no more true to their nature, than the noble unçle is true they see on the stage, who flings his thousands about as if his banker's balance was a splendid joke (as it is), and then goes home and scrimps his wife and children of their barest needs.

In the more simple life of the country, where marriages are made that generally turn out well, the man and woman know each other intimately. They go to school together, and singing-school, and apple-bees, and huskings. The man knows the woman's butter, and bread, and pies, by much experience; and the woman the man's furrow, and swath, and seat on horseback; and as for temper, have they not fallen out and made up ever since they could run alone?

*But in time* we rise in life, and move from the farm to the

city, exchange the kitchen for the drawing-room, linsey-woolsey for silk, and blue jean for broadcloth. The young gentleman comes in his Sunday best, and takes the young lady to the concert ; walks home with her from church, and stays to tea ; admires her touch on the piano, and her opinion of Mrs. Browning ; and she, his superior air, and whatever beside may take her fancy, including, very often, his report of the money he makes, and can make ; and that is really all they know of each other,—and that is less than nothing, and vanity. God forgive them ! It is a game of cards, in which it is of the first importance to both not to reveal their hands ; but the revelation is made at last, and they find that both intended to cheat, and did what they intended.

Of all the things needed now to make a true and happy marriage, it seems to me that honesty, reality, and a sweet and simple intimacy, are the first. There is a conventional prudery about our young people, which must be as bad as it can be. If the young woman is making bread when the bell rings, and the servant says it is Mr. Cypher, there is a rush to the dressing-room to put on a silk and a simper ; and Mr. Cypher probably smells of cloves. I tell you this is wicked, and false as hell. I wonder things are not worse than they are. Young men and women must come as near as possible, in all pure, innocent ways, to that intimacy with each other before they marry which they must come to after, or they have no right to expect good to come of their evil. "Young women make nets instead of cages," Dean Swift said. If he had not been an ingrain villain in his relation to women, he would have added, "and young men do that also." It is bad on both sides. One of the greatest evils leading to the greatest of all, is this total want of frankness and honesty each to the other, in those that must one day be one.

Great trouble comes again out of the mistake that always has been made, and I suppose will be for a long time to come, that the attraction that ends in wedlock is an outer rather than an inner fitness. A winning face and form, though there be nothing within, count for more, with great numbers, than the sweetest graces of the mind and soul. So one marries a doll

and another a dolt, to find in a year or two that they have made a mistake life will not be long enough to repent in and get righted. There is no intimate and ultimate fitness in a man and woman to make them husband and wife except the fitness of mind and character. Beauty will always be an attraction, and it always should be: God has ordained it so. And somewhere in this world, for the beauty that is merely in form and feature, there is always somebody who will rejoice with joy unspeakable, and never repent; and great beauty not seldom goes with great goodness. But in this most solemn transaction to which two human beings can come, all these questions are swept aside, and wait for the question of fitness to be settled first. Are these two the counterparts, not of dark to blonde and the underline to the overline in stature, but of thought and feeling, of habit and tendency of life and soul? because, as a rule, these we cannot alter, any more that we can alter decimals. That is what the Lord means when he bids the man and woman seek each other for husband and wife.

Then again, I will venture to say, the truest wedded life can only come out of the truest unwedded life. It is blank folly to imagine that a woman who has had half a dozen affairs of the heart, as they are called, can wed a man who has sown his wild oats, and make a happy match of it. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall abide in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." You say, that means the merchant and the politician, and the man and woman who would experience religion in the purest and loftiest sense. I say it means a fitness for a true wedding, as certainly as any other thing we can think of. There is no reach in our life in which these great first things can be more essential, either for this world or the world to come. I will enter into no particulars; you know all these as well as I do. You can say it is seeing life; I say it is seeing death: it is building a closet to hold a skeleton in the Holy of Holies.

Purity and truth, as absolute as that of the angels of God, each to the other, from the day you plight your troth to the day **you die, are also imperative**; not in deed alone, but in thought

and word ; and not only towards others, but in your own most intimate life. There is a fornication of the eyes, Jesus says ; and leaves us then in no doubt about his meaning. He means, that men and women may see each other's beauty and grace with eyes full of reverent admiration, and that shall be a blessed sight to them ; or they may look on the same sight with eyes full of lust, and then their hearts are set on fire of hell. There need be no more sin beside that evil glance ; there is fornication from that moment in the substance of the soul. I touch no impossible mountain-peak of purity when I tell you this. I stand among sweet home places, where the best men and women live the truest wedded life to be found on this planet, and the only life the husband and wife can live worthily.

And then this one word more. The wife is still placed by law and custom on the footstool, while the man is on the throne. It is all wrong ; and the time is coming when they shall "sit side by side, full summed in all their powers." Until that day dawns on the world, we must keep its morning star shining through our own windows. That wife is the rare exception who does not bear a full half of the burden, and as good Mrs. Payser says in the story, "Earn one quarter of the income and save another." It is the simplest justice, when she does this, to give her, not one third, but one half of all that is left when we are through. The truest thing to do, if the husband dies first, is to leave everything to the wife, exactly as the wife, if she dies first, leaves everything to the husband. Every will should be drawn in that way, as the last expression of our mutual love and trust. I have read wills made in this city, by men who died in the odor of sanctity, over which I should think the devil would chuckle, so true they were to the constitution of his infernal kingdom.

A pure life, from the day we become responsible to the moment we are revealed to each other ; a frank and open communion from that day to the wedding ; loyalty, purity, and patience mingling with our love from that day onward, and this true expression of our perfect trust from beyond the grave,—these are the things that go to a true wedding, a true home, and a *blessed home life*.

## XI.

## Children and Childhood.

LUKE ix. 47, 48 : "Jesus took a child and set him by him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me ; and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me."

It is very good to me, in reading the Bible, to notice how much of the interest and hope of the world is made to depend on the children that are unborn when the hope springs up, resting far away in the future, but sure to come when God will, and to bring with them some great blessing and help. The world moves on through the ages, and the generations come and go, each bearing its own burden, and fulfilling its own destiny ; and to every one there is allotted a certain share of disappointment and sorrow, and the failure of hopes and expectations. But like a strain of clear, quiet music running through a tumult of clashing discords, the promise of the children to be born, who shall do what the fathers failed to do, runs through the generations, from Adam to the advent of the Holy Child. And when at last this child is born, and has passed through his wonderful career, and dies on the cross, so strong is the conviction that it is in the birth of the babe, not the death of the martyr, that the deepest meaning is hidden, that the new era, the year of our Lord, as we call it, dates from the manger, and not from the cross ; and then, though the preponderant weight of the church seems constantly to have been cast into the balance for Easter, and though twenty books have been written and twenty sermons preached about Calvary to one about Bethlehem, they have never as yet disturbed this steady human instinct that has left Easter to the church, and taken Christmas into the home ; has replied with a carol to every sermon, and insisted that the greatest day of the two was that on whose morning the stars shone right on a stable, and the angels sang about "Peace on earth, and good will to men" because a babe was born, and *was sleeping*, as they sang, in that rude, dark place.

This, I say, is a remarkable quality in our Bible. It is no less so as a fact in this common life to which the Bible is a perpetual index and inspiration. What was true in that old world, is still true in the new. The hope of humanity, the promise of the world to come on this planet, rests in the children. When the Spartans replied to the king, who demanded fifty of their children as hostages, "We would prefer to give you a hundred of our most distinguished men," it was only an expression of the everlasting value of the child to any commonwealth and to every age. They had been defeated, but their hope was that the children would conquer. They had done their best, but their children, they hoped, would do better. Sparta would rise again from the cradle and the nursery. The new hands would do the new work, and the fresh hearts receive the fresh inspiration; and so, in the hope that still shone for Sparta, fifty children were of more value than a hundred fathers. It was a truth which every age has, in some way, to learn. The great hope is always in the new birth. It is in the next new life that God hides the next new thing the world needs for its use. The time comes when great discoveries stop short of their consummation for want of a new man, and no more new discoveries are made. When the church is certain to fail for the need of a new apostle to refresh the old truths or to announce the new; when the great movement that began with one reformer, will thin out like the circles on the water if it cannot be taken up and carried on by another, and when no new reform can find a man to storm us with great burning words and stand for it,—length of life and weight of wisdom can never do it. When a great man dies, and a nation weeps for his untimely end, if we had but faith like a grain of mustard-seed, we should grow glad again, through our tears, for a timely beginning.

"Mortals cry a man is dead;  
Angels sing a child is born."

The hope of mankind is not in the old life so much as in the new birth. If the Marquis of Worcester had lived even down to the days of Watt, nobody believes he would have

added "Watt's steam engine" to his century of inventions. Franklin, at eighty-five, was as far, or farther than ever from inventing Morse's telegraph; Servetus and Priestley might have lived as long as Methuselah did, and they would never have done the work of Channing or Parker, of Wilberforce or Garrison, or Elizabeth Fry, or Lucretia Mott. "What shall we do?" the nation cries; "our great men are dying out." It is not in the hundred distinguished men, but in the fifty undistinguishable children, that our hope lies. This preacher has got almost to the end of his tether; but there is a three-year-old child standing on a stool preaching to a three-year-old audience, who will win the world to a sweeter and nobler gospel in that very pulpit. All posterity stands before us in the presence of the children now in their cradles, or in the deep mystery of Providence towards which the world is always looking; and every generation begins the history of the world anew.

Now this, if I can see into the thing at all, must be the deepest reason that can be given for the unspeakable loyalty and reverence for children that so constantly filled the heart and life of Christ. He would teach us in this way to reverence this promise that lies in them as we reverence God, because within it is folded all that is most glorious and good in the future. It seems to me, as I watch how the heart of Jesus is drawn to children, and how his arms are drawn about them, that he is always saying to us, "It is not only for their innocence, for their faith and trust, and for the heaven I see in their eyes, I do this, but because I know that within them, as the germ within the seed, and the seed within the earth, lies the whole future harvest of blessing to mankind;" and I think if he had been on earth to hear that Swedenborgian say one Sunday lately, that the New Church of God on earth began in 1757, he would have replied, My friend, that is now a very old church, the new church begins now. Into a stable or a palace, the eternal Providence, to which you trust so clearly, has sent a child who will tell the new truth and found the new church again to-day, because the new church is not that which will garner the bones of a

dead prophet, but that which will faithfully work out the will of God, as it is announced in these very moments by the prophet of the new time. I never said of Moses, what I now say of this little one, "He that receiveth him in my name receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me," because the hope of the world rests not in the sepulchre, no matter what may be its beauty and splendor, but in the nursery, though it be a stable.

I have tried to open this doctrine to this light, because I want now to consider some things that belong to it, as the branch belongs to the bole and the flower to the root.

If it be true then that the hope of the world lies in the cradle, not only that our life may go on at all, but that it may constantly reach upward towards nobler and better things, in what relation do we, who are now responsible for this new life, stand to it? and, as it is intrusted to our care, how do we deal with it? If to receive a little child in the name of Christ is so awful and sacred a thing, that when I do so I receive in some wonderful way Christ and God together into my home and heart, what am I doing about it; how much do I believe of it? Is the child and its childhood a very common and common-place thing, so that I am subjecting it to my convenience first, and then to all my whims after? or is it so great a matter that, like Israel with the ark, only the most sacred hands can be laid on it, and things done for it as it rests within and encloses the light and the shadow of God? And in saying this, I must fail of the first shred of the faithfulness that ought to stand like a wall of fire about every pulpit and preacher, if I did not here call attention to the outcry that is raised on all sides of us about the danger that is now threatening this nation through the baleful decrease in these blessed gifts from God that are the hope and treasure of the world, and in whom the fairest hope of this nation ought to rest. I need not say what a difficulty I encounter in touching on this matter in any way; I cannot tell you how impossible I have found it to put my meaning into words. But it is my advantage that I speak as unto wise men and women, who need no words of mine beyond this hint. I speak for that, however, which ought to give any man courage



who has to deal with these sacred things in our life, when I say, that wherever this sin may hide itself, and under whatever name it may hide, the reason for it is no better than is, I believe, usually given. Then there is a word to say about it which goes deeper than that of the physician, the political economist, or the patriot. It is, that in some awful sense we refuse to receive God into our hearts and homes when hearing this voice saying to us, "Whoso will receive one of these little ones in my name, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me;" we break down the footway by which the divine nature was trying to cross over to us, and then think that somehow we have circumvented Providence. Foolish and vain then, as foolishness and vanity is our belief in Trinity or Unity: we may have the name of God, but we have put God away. Worthless as chaff our profession of receiving God in Christ; he stretched out his hands then, but we would not hearken. Let us pray, "Thy kingdom come"—we have barred its coming to the best of our ability, and if it come now, it will be in spite of us. O, friends, bear with me, you that are spotless, and let me speak, for there may be guilt somewhere, that my word and God's word may startle. I tell you, when this unspeakable offence is done to Heaven, the worst possibility is not what we may have taken from the measure, but from the hope, and joy, and fulness of life. It is, that in some way, we cannot even imagine, we may have made the whole world poorer by what we have done. What loss to this world, if once such a sin had been hidden away in Stratford-upon-Avon, or in the poor clay biggin two miles from Ayr in Scotland, or in the hut eight miles from Newcastle in England, or in many another place shielded and shrouded then, as our homes are now, but since then lifted up among the shining points of the world! It may be that it needs be such offences will come, but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh. I could wish no worse hell for my worst enemy, if I ever take to bad wishing, than that one should haunt him in eternity, who might have come and poured a mighty treasure into the commonwealth of the world, but for that sin that kept him out of it. \*But I leave this painful possibility for the great

positive truth of what is folded in the child and his childhood, and what we are to do about it.

And this must be said first, that if we are wise and faithful to our trust that have them, there is in each child the making of a man or a woman who shall be a blessing and be blessed. Men and women who shall add their mite to the wealth of the world, if it be but to smite with the hammer, or to stand at the wash-tub, and open a way by their faithfulness over one talent for the trust of two or ten. It is not for us to make our children great, but we all can do a great deal towards making them good. The divine ordination that will give to one one talent, to another two, and to another ten, it is not ours to control; but the Holy Spirit that will make the future man or woman faithful over that which they have, will be sure to come in answer to the prayer which is first a longing, and then a wise and loving endeavor that it shall be so. Great influences, which we cannot understand, stretching over the whole span of human life, will make one man as great as a Mariposa pine and another as small as a dwarf pear; yet in its degree this shall be as good as that, while the sun will shine, and the rain fall, and the blessing of Heaven rest on both. A wise and witty writer has said, that it is about equal to being canonized to marry into some families; but Jesus said, "Whosoever shall receive one of these little ones in my name, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me;" and then saying not a word about which little one he meant, or what family it would come from, he left the sweet faith undisturbed in every mother's and father's heart, that their own little ones can bear with them this best blessing as surely as any others, anywhere. The possibility, however, is that the little one may become not only good but great; goodness of itself may be greatness as it was in Washington and Lincoln; or there may be greatness without goodness, as the vast catalogue of mighty men who have been the scourge and curse of the race can testify. But greatness and goodness in men like Chalmers and Channing among the preachers of this century, and others in every walk of art, and literature, and life,—these combine greatness and goodness

together, and then they reach the loftiest place on which a man can stand.

This, fathers and mothers, is the deeper possibility which gathers about the children that come to you from God, and bring God when they come into your home and life. They may be not only good but great—great and good together. Yet this is the hidden mystery that only God himself can reveal, as he reveals himself in the children he gives us. That small hand, tireless in mischief, cutting and hammering at things until you are distracted, may be then and there feeling its way towards some achievement in the arts that shall lighten all the burdens of life, and give man for evermore a new advantage in his strife with nature. There may be a surgeon, or a singer, or a preacher, or a painter, or a man deep and wise in science, or in government, or in comprehension of mind or matter; or a woman in this better time that is dawning for woman, whose path shall be as the sun, shining more and more unto the perfect day,—these may be among those little ones coming up about you in the home, or whom you are teaching in the school, till you are so weary at your task sometimes that you hardly know what to do. This is the clear certainty, that besides the regular rank and file,—the men who are always needed to work in the common day of the world,—there must be mighty men in the new generation, as there have been and are in this. Preachers that shall win the world to hear them; reformers who shall storm it; statesmen who shall be its great ministers, and poets who shall be its great singers,—all the men and women who are needed to make the next age greater and better than this,—and it will take no small pattern in anything to do that;—these are all coming through your homes; they are in their cradles, or waiting on the holy law of God for their time to be born. And they will come quietly into the world, in cities and backwoods, in the mansion and the cabin, and in the cabin more than the mansion, for the first-born sons of God always seem to take to the stable and the manger. Then in some way they will at last begin to give hints of the greatness with which they come invested. None will know it except their mother; and she will not understand

it, but like Mary, she will ponder it over, and hide these things in her heart; then the day will declare it, and these great ones will take their place among the immortal men and women of the earth. But whether they will be great and good together, or only good; able to win the world, or only able to cultivate a little patch of its soil and raise some chickens; if we will receive them in the name of Christ, we receive Christ in them and God also.

Now what is it to receive a child in the name of Christ? In answering this question, I want to affirm that it would need no answer, had there not been so many mistakes made about this simple, natural, and beautiful truth; if one man, and set of men and dogmas did not insist that every child is wholly defiled by sin; needs to be purified in the atoning blood; to experience a change of heart; and be as soon as possible subjected to the torture that is called by these teachers "getting religion." The first time a father, lost in this delusion, looks on his sleeping babe, there is this shadow on its face cast by the defilement he believes in. So to him to receive the little one in the name of Christ, is to subject it to all the troubles which come in the train of the father's black foreboding; it is to be continually told of its depravity, until, perhaps, at last it believes in it; to be made a bond slave of the Sabbath, and of long prayers and longer sermons; and then at last, either to break away in desperation or be born again, by which change in children, good as it is in men, I often observe they leave behind them every thing that is most natural and beautiful in their childhood, and, in giving themselves to God, wrench themselves away from all that one thinks God would love to see in children, if we may judge what he loves by the way he guides and inspires nearly all the children he has sent into the world.

With another, to receive a child in the name of Christ, is to subject it to an endless round of outward appliances; of catechisms, confirmations, and prayers said at stated times and in a stated way, until the sweet, warm life takes the form of the mould into which it is so carefully cast, and loses the beautiful fashion it brought from heaven, in getting ready to go

there ; as if in some other country a man should train his children for a future life in this republic, in which a certain self-command and power to meet all emergencies man-fashion, are indispensable, should fit them for this life by training them to the drill and pipe-clay of Austria or Russia. Indeed, this doctrine of what it is to receive a child in the name of Christ, is, I think, almost endlessly mistaken ; while the true way lies open before us all, and is so clear, that if we were not pre-occupied with these other ways, I do not see how we could possibly mistake it.

For, if you will remember for a moment that double name by which, or by one of which, Christ was always known while he lived in the world—the Son of Man, as he called himself, and the Son of God, as others often called him,—you will see at once this one true way that instantly closes all other ways whatever. For to receive a child in the name of Christ, is just to receive it in both these names, as the Son of Man and the Son of God ; and then, accepting this fact that there, as it lies in the cradle or runs through your house, is a being bearing in its life this human and divine nature together ; that it is your child, and the child of God ; treat it as it becomes you to treat a being holding such a glorious inheritance ; believe in the treasure that has come to you in this earthen vessel, and value it as it deserves ; then that will be to receive the child in the name of Christ. It is first to receive the child as you would have received Christ himself, if your home had been selected as the one into which he should be born, and you had known what grace and glory was folded in the sleeping babe, and then to receive it as your own life back again,—the life of God and your life together ; this to open out to the sun and wind of this world, and that to reach upward towards the better world from which it has descended to bless you,—The Son of Man, and the Son of God both, and both together ; earth and heaven hidden in that crib in your chamber.

And so we come directly to the sight of two clear principles in our conduct toward these little ones ; one is, that we shall guide and govern with our best wisdom and love the son of

man, the life that is of the earth, earthy, the first man, as Paul calls him ; and the second is, that we shall guard and reverence, with a faith and trust as great as we ever put into our worship of God, the Son of God, the life that is from above. I remember Harriet Martineau tells how, when she had grown to be quite a girl, a little one was born into their home ; and as she would look at it, and ponder, not knowing what was to come of it, she got a terror into her heart that the babe would never speak or walk, or do anything she could do ; because, she said, How can it, seeing that it is so entirely helpless now ? But she found, when the right time came, the feet found their footing, the tongue its speech, and everything came along in its own time ; and then, instead of the babe, she had a brother who was able to take her part, and teach her things who had taught him. I presume it is her brother James she describes. And so the babe becomes an illustration, when he came to manhood, of the hidden greatness and goodness I have spoken of, together. But what I mentioned this for, was the illustration it gives of a very common latent fear in the hearts, not of sisters so much, as of fathers and mothers, that the life that has come to them, and is their life over again, will not scramble, or grow, or wrestle into its own place as theirs has done. They have no adequate belief in the hidden man folded away within the small frail nature, and that this man will walk among men, and talk with them as a man, and so they spend the better part of their time in trying to order afresh what our wise mother Nature has ordered already. This is all a mistake, every time. Make sure that the child will walk upright ; that it has fair play to grow into a man or a woman, with as good guidance and as little interference as possible. Have faith in the Son of Man in the child, and if you are aware that there has been sin and folly in your own life, guard this new life as well as you can from the consequences of that sin and folly, and then you may be sure that there is quite as good a hope for the little one as ever there was for you. Give it freedom and fresh air, and all the teaching it can stand, without exhausting life in getting knowledge, and then trust the rest to God, as your fathers did before you ; and if I know anything

of the way of life, there will be a better chance in this new world and new time than there has been for yourself.

The guardianship of the Son of God in your little one is, perhaps, a deeper and more sacred matter ; but it is all summed up in a word. Do whatever a father and mother may do to reveal to the child, not his baseness, but his holiness ; not that he must be depraved, but that it is impossible he shall not be good and noble. When Dr. Arnold went to Rugby, the school was in a frightful condition, and it was considered clever and manly to do the basest things, and then to deceive the master about them. Arnold never for one moment appeared to believe he was being cheated. He said, practically, "Boys, I will not believe in your depravity ;" and then presently the boys were all saying, "What a shame it is to lie to Arnold, when he always believes you ;" then the man's faith in them burnt up all the faithlessness in their hearts. Believe in the presence of God in the child, I say ; and if you find you must do it, you may believe in the presence of the devil, too ; but you must not, and cannot, believe in his masterhood.

When I was in New York once, I received a letter, together with a book, from a lady, a member of the Society of Friends. I found the book to be the *Life of Isaac T. Hopper*, I suppose one of the noblest men in his way this country has ever known, and in nothing more wonderful than in his perfect love, and trust in peace and good will as the true gospel of Christ. But the first chapter of the book is taken up with a recital of the deeds of mischief done by Isaac when he was a child. It is one of the most extraordinary chapters of childhood I ever read. The way that little fellow would astonish the good Quakers who came to see his folks, was a marvel. His pranks with pins and twine, and even gunpowder, cannot be told ; not a doubt but many a friend went away feeling that if ever the unnamable incarnation of evil did get bodily into a boy, and stay there, that little Hopper was the "all possessed." But one thing was steadily there through all the wild pranks the lad would play, and that was, a certain quick reproof of conscience,—the good striving with the evil ; and a wise mother was there to believe, as all wise mothers do, that what was good

was very good, and the evil was never hopeless, and by God's good blessing on the boy, and her wise and loving care, it would all come right; and so she found, at last, they were more than conquerors. So the mischief of a child, who was only mischievous because he had more energy than he knew what to do with, became the strength of a man among the noblest and best of the good in this age. It is but one instance in a thousand of a nature so full of life in our own children, we do not know what we shall do with it; yet while we are fretting and foreboding, but still doing the best we can, the unslumbering Providence is, out of seeming evil, still educing good: touching the conscience when we do not know of it; opening the new nature, in his own way to the new heavens and new earth; raising up a man to the Lord; when Jesus said, "Whosoever receiveth one of these little ones in my name, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me," he made no distinction as to the kind; they were all alike to him; they all held this awful and wonderful possibility for the future in their nature of greatness and goodness. So we must welcome little children when they come to us as the fresh presence of God in the world—the new creation on which, and in which, the whole future of the world rests in the love and grace of God.

## XII.

*Tender, Trusty, and True.*

PSALMS xxxiv. 11-17: "Come, children, listen to me, and I will teach you how to serve the Lord. Never say bad words, nor what is not true. Go right away from what is bad; do good; try your best to be gentle and kind. Then the Lord will hear you when you cry to him in your trouble, and help you every time."

THIS sermon, as I said last Sunday, is all for the children, and not for the men and women: so I have tried to put the text into easy words, so that children may know what it means as soon as I read it. And I should like to make my sermon as plain as my text; then children will know what my sermon means too. Sermons are divided into three parts. I am not quite sure whether a sermon can be a sermon if it is not in



three parts. At any rate, it is very useful to make three parts, for then you can guess how much more the preacher will say ; and little Hattie Collyer told me one day, she was so glad when I said thirdly ; for she knew then I should soon be done. Now, my three parts will be three all in one to-day ; and every one will begin with the same letter. First, Tender ; second Trusty ; and third, True : and I want in the sermon to say what will help you to be tender, trusty, and true. I am very glad that I have found such a nice good text to preach from ; it is just what I wanted : and I hope you will take care not to forget the text. When I was a boy, I had a Bible I could carry to church in my pocket ; then when the man said, " You will find my text in such a place, to put a mark in it, and then to read all about it when I went home. I wish this were done by the children in this school. I can tell you children, it is a real good thing to do : for it will help you to know ever so much more than you do know about the best book that ever was printed, or it may be that ever will be printed, as long as the world stands. Well, now, if you read the text when you get home, and the psalm too, you will find that King David wanted to tell young folks what I want to tell you ; that is, first, how to be good ; and then what is the use of being good. And he does not say, " I think so," or, " It may be so," but, " It is so." As if he had said, " Now, children, you just trust me. I was once a child like you. I am now a man and a king. I can see away back to the time when I was a little boy, and begged honey from my mother, and cried when I didn't get it. I can tell just what was good for me, and what was bad ; where I came out right, because I began right ; and where I came out wrong, because I began wrong ; and I want to tell you, so you may know what to do. Come, children, listen to me."

I can remember when I was in the Sunday-school, and had just begun to read about David, that I did not feel sure he ever was a real little boy that went to school as I did, and played marbles, and had to knuckle down, and had a peg-top, a jack-knife, some slate pencils, ever so many buttons, and a piece of string, all in one pocket ; that he ever had to try hard *not to cry* when he went to school very cold mornings ; or that

the teacher spoke sharp to him when the little chap had tried his best to get his lesson, and did not get it very well. But you know ministers have got to find out all about such men as David ; and I have found out enough to make me feel sure he was once a little boy, just like one of you ; and had to get verses, like you ; and didn't like it, like you : that he did not like to go to bed early, like you ; or to get up early, like you. I rather fear that, in the summer, he ate green apples, unripe melons, hard peaches, and sour plums, as you do ; and got sick, and was very sorry, and had to take medicine, as you do ; and said he would never do it again : and then I believe he never did do it again, after he promised not to ; which I hope is like you also. Now, just here I was trying to see what sort of boy David was when he grew bigger ; and, as I shut my eyes, and so tried to see it all clear, I heard a noise right under my study window. This was about four o'clock, Friday afternoon ; the schools were out, and the children running home. I turned my head to see what was the matter, and then I saw what I want to tell you. About ten boys were standing together. All at once a big boy knocked a little boy down, and rolled him in the snow. The little boy got up, and said "What did you do that for?" Then the big one drew off, as if he was going to do it again ; and I believe he would have done it as bad as before, but the small boy walked sobbing away towards home.

"There," I said, when I had seen that, "I know what David never did do : he never struck a boy that was no match for him ; he never was a coward like that ; for he is a coward to strike a small boy so ; and those others are not the boys they ought to be, to stand by and see it done." I saw such a thing in a picture once ; it was called the Wolf and the Lamb. A great, cruel boy meets a small, delicate lad who has lost his father, and stands over him with his fist doubled, just as I saw that boy stand under my study window. I think if any boy in this church were to see that picture, he would instantly say, "What a shame to use a boy so who is not your match !" Once I read in the Life of Dr. Channing, who was one of the best men that ever lived (a great deal better than David, because he lived in a better time); what he once did when he was a boy,

and saw a thing like that. Little Channing was one of the kindest and most tender-hearted boys I ever heard of. I will tell you a story to show you how kind he was, and tender, and true. One day he found in a bush a nest full of young birds just out of the shell. Children, did you ever see a nest full of birds just out of the shell—little tiny, downy things, with hardly more feathers than an oyster? These birds were just so when William Channing found them; and when he touched them with his finger, to feel how soft and warm they were, they all began to gape, very much as you do when I preach a very long sermon. Well, little Channing knew the birds did not gape because he preached a long sermon, but because they were hungry. So what did he do but run right away, get some nice soft crumbs, and feed them; and after that, every time school was out, he ran to feed his birds. But one day, when he went to the nest, there it lay on the ground, torn and bloody, and the little birds all dead; and the father-bird was crying on the wall, and the mother-bird was crying on a tree. Then little Channing tried to tell them that he did not kill their poor young brood; that he never could do such a mean, cruel thing as that; that he had tried to feed them, and help them along, so they might fly. But it was no use; he talked baby talk to them as you do to your little sister. They could not understand him, but just kept on crying; so then he sat down and cried too. Now this was the sort of boy Channing was; and I was going to tell you that one day he heard of a big boy beating a little one, like that one under my window. Channing was a little boy; he was a little man when he was full grown; but then he had a big soul. I was going to say he had a soul as big as a church; but indeed his soul was bigger than all the churches in the world;—and when he heard of that, he went right to the boy, ever so much larger than he was, and said, “Did you strike that little boy?” “Yes, I did; and what then?” “Then,” said Channing, “you are a coward, because he was no match for you; and now I am going to whip you for doing it.” Because he had a big soul, though he was a small boy, he went in, and did handsomely; and that was the only time he ever fought *in his life*. And I, standing in this pulpit, honor him more for *than if he had never fought at all*. Boys, I like peace; I

like to see you play like good, true-hearted little men. Never fight if you can help it ; but never strike a boy who is no match for you, and never stand by quietly while another boy is doing it. Tender and true, boys ; tender and true. King David, King Alfred, George Washington, William Channing, Theodore Parker, more great men than I can name, were all that sort ; and they came out right because they went in right. Brave as lions, true as steel, with kind hearts for doves and ravens and sparrows, they would never tear birds' nests, or sling stones trying to kill birds, because they felt as Jesus did when he said, " Blessed are the merciful."

To see David when he was a boy, you might think there was not much in him, because he was so tender-hearted ; because he would not strike, or pinch, or prick with a pin, a boy that was no match for him, or take his jackknife, or split his top, or spoil his kite. But look out for a tender-hearted lad. I tell you, he can flash, and strike too, when the right time comes. Why, just look at this very David ! One day, when he had grown big enough to stay with the sheep, there came along a bear, and another day a lion ; and each of them seized a lamb, and was making off with it. Now, what do you think that boy under my window would have done if he had been in David's place ? I believe he would have run away, and left his sheep. What did David do ? I will tell you. He had a staff, you know, made out of good sound wood, with a crook at one end and a spike at the other, and both times he made after the wild beast ; gave him, I suppose, the hardest knock he knew how to give with the crook, and then fought him with the pike. There was a soldier, living only six miles from our house when I was a boy, who fought a Bengal tiger once in India with nothing but a bayonet, and killed him after a tremendous struggle. I guess David had a hard time with the lion and the bear : but he says the Lord helped him ; and I have no doubt he did. I believe the Lord helped little Channing to fight that big bad boy in Rhode Island, because Channing was on the Lord's side ; and you know that the hymn we sing so often after sermon says,—

" He always wins who sides with God ;  
To him no chance is lost."

*Which is just as true as gospel.*

Well, then, there is another thing I want to say. These men I mentioned were not only good and kind, and true as steel, but, when they said a thing, you might be as sure it was true as if you had seen it twenty times over. I think David did sometimes get into mischief. I suppose he spilled the milk once ; but I am sure, if he did, he did not blame the cat. I guess he tore his jacket rambling after olives ; but if he did, I know he did not say a big boy tore it as he came home from school. I think he had to take a whipping now and then : if he had, I believe he just stood up, and took it like a man. This, children, this being true is a great thing. If you ask me which is worse, to be cruel to small boys and kittens and birds or to tell a lie, I really could not tell you. Now I think it is this, and then I think it is that : they are both as bad as bad can be. And now I want to tell you a little story of a little boy who was all three—tender and trusty and true ; and then I will be through with my sermon.

Away off, I believe, in Edinburgh, two gentlemen were standing at the door of a hotel one very cold day, when a little boy, with a poor, thin, blue face, his feet bare, and red with the cold, and with nothing to cover him but a bundle of rags, came and said, "Please, sir, buy some matches?" "No : don't want any," the gentleman said. "But they are only a penny a box," the little fellow pleaded. "Yes ; but you see we do not want a box," the gentleman said again. "Then I will gie ye twa boxes for a penny," the boy said at last. "And so, to get rid of him," the gentleman, who tells the story in an English paper, says, "I bought a box. But then I found I had no change : so I said, 'I will buy a box to-morrow.' 'O, do buy them the night, if you please,' the boy pleaded again. 'I will rin and get ye the change ; for I am verra hungry.' So I gave him the shilling, and he started away ; and I waited for him, but no boy came. Then I thought I had lost my shilling ; but still there was that in the boy's face I trusted, and I did not like to think bad of him. Well, late in the evening, a servant came, and said a little boy wanted to see me. When he was brought in, I found it was a smaller brother of the boy that got my shilling, but, if possible, still more ragged and poor and thin.

He stood a moment diving into his rags, as if he was seeking something; and then said, 'Are you the gentleman that bought the matches frae Sandie?' 'Yes.' 'Weel, then, here's fourpence oot o' yer shillin'. Sandie canna come; he's no weel. A cart run ower him, and knocked him doon, and he lost his bonnet, and his matches, and your sevenpence; and both his legs are broken; and he's no weel at a', and the doctor says he'll dee. And that's a' he can gie ye the noo,' putting fourpence down on the table; and then the poor child broke down into great sobs. So I fed the little man," the gentleman goes on to say, "and then I went with him to see Sandie. I found that the two little things lived with a wretched, drunken step-mother; their own father and mother were both dead. I found poor Sandie lying on a bundle of shavings: he knew me as soon as I came in, and said, 'I got the change, sir, and was coming back; and then the horse knocked me doon, and both my legs are brocken. And, O Reuby, little Reuby! I am sure I am dee'in! and who will take care o' ye, Reuby, when I am gane? What will ye do, Reuby?' Then I took the poor little sufferer's hand, and told him I would always take care of Reuby. He understood me, and had just strength to look at me as if he would thank me; then the light went out of his blue eyes; and, in a moment,

‘He lay within the light of God,  
Like a babe upon the breast;  
Where the wicked cease from troubling,  
And the weary are at rest.’”

Come, children, listen to me, and I will teach you there is but one way: it is to be tender and trusty and true. Whenever you are tempted to tell what is not true, or to be hard on other little boys or girls, or to take what mother has said you must not take, I want you to remember little Sandie. This poor little man, lying on a bundle of shavings, dying and starving, was tender and trusty and true; and so God told the gentleman to take poor friendless Reuby, and to be a friend to him. And Sandie heard him say he would do it—just the last thing he ever did hear; and then, before I could tell you, the

dark room, the bad step-mother, the bundle of shavings, the weary, broken little limbs, all faded away, and Sandie was among the angels. And I think the angels would take him, and hold him until one came with the sweetest, kindest face you ever saw : and that was Jesus who said, "Suffer the little child to come unto me ;" and he took him in his arms, and blessed him. And then Sandie's own father and mother would come, and bear him away to their own home, for in our Father's house are many mansions ; and there Sandie lives now. And I think that the angels, who have never known any pain, who never wore rags or sold matches, or were hungry or cold, came to look at Sandie in his new home, and wonder, and say one to another, "That is the little man who kept his word, and sent back fourpence, and was tender and trusty and true when he was hungry and faint, and both his legs were broken, and he lay a-dying." And Sandie would only find out what a grand good thing he had done when he was right home there in heaven. But I tell you to day, little children, because, whether it be hard, or whether it be easy, I want you to be as tender and trusty and true as Sandie.

## XIII.

## Patience.

JAMES i. 4 : "Let patience have her perfect work."

THIS apostle, in speaking of patience, intimates that it is not a belonging, but a being, a spirit separate, in some manner, from the human spirit, as the angels are ; trying to do something for us, but only able as we will give it free course ; so that his charge to his fellow Christians all the world over, to let patience have her perfect work, is not so much that we shall do something, as that we shall let something be done for us. All the help required of us towards patience, is not to hinder her working ; then she will do all that is needed, in her own time and in her own way, and we shall be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. So that, when a man or woman says, "I will have patience," they speak closer to the truth than when they

say, "I will be patient." To say, "I will be patient," has a touch of assumption in it; to say, "I will have patience," denotes humility. The one word means, I will be what I will; the other, I will be what God will help me be. It is as if one man said, "I will be learned," and another said, "I will have learning." And a very brief reflection will enable us to see that the apostle is borne out in this happy distinction by the nature and grace of things as we see them all about us, and by what we feel within us. Patience is not there to begin with. It is no inborn grace, like love. It comes to us by and by, and tries to find room in our nature, and to stay and bless us, and so make us altogether its own.

The first thing we are aware of in any healthy and hearty child, is the total absence and destitution of this spirit of patience. No trace of it is to be discovered in the eager, hungry outcries, and the aimless, but headstrong, struggles against things as they are, and must be, but that never would be for another moment if these young lords and kings of impatience could have their way. But presently Patience comes, and rests on the mother's lifted finger as she shakes it at the tiny rebel, and puts a tone he has never heard before within the tender trills of her voice, and he looks up with a dim sort of wonder, as if he would say, What is that? But if the spirit be really and truly with the mother, it goes then to the child, and sheds upon him the dew of its blessing.

Then, in a few years, she looks at him out of the face of the old kitchen clock. It seems impossible that this steady-going machine should be so impassive, and persist in that resistless march; should not be quick to strike the hour he would drag before its time out of the strong heavens, or should not delay a little as he sits in the circle when the day is done, and dreads the exodus, at the stroke of eight, to his chamber. Poor little man! he has got into the old sorrow. It is not the clock, but the sun and stars he would alter, and the eternal ways.

Then, as the child passes into the boy, he has still to find this angel of patience. It is then very common for him to transfer his revolt from the sun to the seasons. If he is in the country, he rebels at the slow, steady growth of things; they



never begin to come up to his demand. It is with all boys as it was with John Sterling. His father gave him a garden-bed, to till as he would ; and he put in potatoes. They did not appear when he thought they should ; so he dug them out, and put in something else ; and so he kept on digging in and out, all one summer, because the things sprouted and bloomed at once in his hot little heart, like Jonah's gourd. It was an instance of the whole boy life. Nature can never come up to his notion of what she ought to do until Patience comes to help him. She shows him at last that the seasons must have their time, and he must bring his mind and action into accord with the everlasting order ; for without that he can do nothing.

But every boy, of any quick, strong quality, struggles with things as they are and must be—wants to alter them to suit himself. It seems as if he had brought the instinct, but lost the memory, of a world and life that were just what he wanted, and he cannot give it up until this angel comes and helps him conform to his new condition, and he only minds her at last when he feels he must. The only children in whom she has her perfect work are those small martyrs that begin to suffer as soon as they begin to live, and are never released from their pain until God takes them to his breast in heaven. There is no such patience besides as they show, as there is no such pity besides as they win.

But your big, healthy boy fights it out, hard and long ; nothing is just as he wants it. Christmas comes like a cripple, and school, when the holidays are over, like a deer. It is a shame cherries and apples will not ripen sooner, and figures find their places more tractably, and geographies run as straight as a line. He knows no such felicity besides as to run to a fire, or after a ball, or to burn fireworks, or scamper away on a horse. The reason is just that which we always give as we watch him, when we say, "Now he is in his element." He is striking out, like a strong swimmer, on a splendid tide of impatience. He hears the mighty waters rolling evermore, and deep calleth unto deep in his heart.

It is easy to see, again, that these habits of the child and  
are only the germs of a larger impatience in the youth and

the prime. We soon get our lesson from the angel about the kitchen clock, and the courses of the sun, and the limits of our power to make this world turn the other way. We learn to come to time, and set ourselves to its steady dictation in all common things ; and patience, so far, has her perfect work.

I wonder to see the patience of some children, at last, about what they know they have got to do and be, in their tasks and strivings. I see small girls of ten who might well shame big men of forty as they buckle to their lessons, and go steadily through them ; and even boys are sometimes almost admirable ; though the angel of Patience must always feel about boys, I think, as that man in New York must feel, who keeps in the same cage the cat and the canary, and the mouse and the owl, with half a dozen more of the sharpest antagonisms of nature. Patience must feel about boys as that man feels about his animals,—that after all his pains, there is no telling what they may do at any moment.

But if the boy does learn all he ought to learn about times and seasons, and tasks and treats, and lines and limits, it is very seldom that the lesson holds good as he begins the march to his manhood, or when he gets there. Patience, then, has to teach him deeper things : time still says one thing and his desire another, and he hungers again for what God has forbidden in the very condition of his life. But now it is unspeakably more serious than it was ten years ago, as she comes to him and tries to teach him her great lesson. She has to remember what myriads of young men, strong, and eager, and headstrong as he is, have broken away from her, after all, like the impatient prodigal in the Gospels, and have only come back and listened to her word when they had run through their whole possessions ; and had to be patient under pain and loss, when they might have rejoiced with exceeding joy over powers incorruptible, undefiled, and of a perennial strength and grace.

Fortune and position, weight for weight, with what faculty the Maker has given him, is just as sure to come to a man in this country as the crop to the farmer, and the web to the weaver, if he will only let this angel have her perfect work. The bee does not more surely lay up her honey, or the squirrel

his nuts in store, enough to last until May brings the new bloom, and the tender shoots break forth in the woods, than a man, with the same temperate and enduring patience, can lay up life enough, and all life needs, to last him from the time when the frost seals his faculties to the new spring that waits where the Lord is the Sun. But what multitudes want to do, is to trust themselves to some short cut across the dominion of the sworn enemy of this angel.

Travellers in India tell us they have seen a magician make an orange tree spring, and bloom, and bear fruit, all in half an hour. That is the way many believe fortune ought to come. They cannot wait for its patient, steady, seasonable growth; that is all too slow, as the time piece and garden-bed are to the child; they must put the time-piece forward, and that will bring thanksgiving, and gather their crop when they sow their seed. Patience comes and whispers, "It will never do; the perfect work is only that done by my spirit; the magician can never bring his thirty-minute oranges to market, because they can never nourish anybody as those do that come in the old divine fashion, by the patient sun and seasons." He gives no heed to the wise, sweet counsels; takes his own way; and then if he wins, finds that somehow he has lost in the winning; the possession is not half so good as the expectation: but the rule is, that the man who will not let Patience have her perfect work in building up his position and fortune, ends bare of both, and has nothing but a harvest of barren regrets.

No man, again, comes to middle age without finding that this is the truth about all the noble sensations that give such a color and grace to our life, and are such loyal ministrants to its blessing, if we can say, "No" to the enemies of our good angel when they come and counsel us to disregard her ways, to let our passions take the bit in their teeth, and go tearing where they will.

Twenty years ago last June, when I had been a few weeks in this country, I tasted, for the first time in my life, an exquisite summer luxury; and it seemed so good that I thought I could never get enough of it. I got some more, and then **more, and then** I found, for the first time, I think, what

it is to have too much of a good thing. I ate, that day, of the tree of knowledge of good and evil ; and now I care nothing for that good thing any more when I taste it. The angel is there with his flaming sword, insisting that I shall only eat of it out of Eden. It has been to me ever since a parable of this deep old verity. I disregarded the angel whispering, " You had better take care ; if you eat that for a steady diet, through a whole June day, you do it in spite of me ; the hunger for some more, which has been growing all your life, is a pledge that the good of this will abide with you as long as you live, if you will always let hunger wait on appetite." I had no idea of doing that. Impatience got the rein, and I gathered and ate the whole harvest of that good thing between dawn and dark. I mention this, because it is one of those experiences we all buy at a great price by the time we are forty, and then offer to give them away to young friends of twenty, but can seldom find anybody who wants them. In our youth, it is our misfortune, in a great many of these ways, to refuse to let Patience have her perfect work, and then to rue it as long as we live.

Every glass of wine, or dram of whiskey, drunk by a healthy and strong young man, is an insult and injury to this good angel, and makes it so far impossible for her to do her perfect work, because he is spending ahead of his income of life, and bringing a fine power of being to beggary, if not to worse than that. He can only get that glow and flame at a heavy discount, both of life itself and of all that makes life worth living. Patience would help him to infinitely finer pleasures from her simple and wholesome stores, and they would stay with him as long as he lived ; but he will not listen to her counsels, and will have none of her reproofs ; therefore will she weep at his calamities, and mock when his dole cometh.

This is but one way in which we can make this vast mistake through our impatience and desire to forestall the good that God will give us in his long, steady, seasonal fashion. There is a whole world of evils of very much the same sort, some more fatal still than the one I have named. It is the same thing whichever way we turn. Nature says one thing, and desire another. Only the perfect work of Patience can

make both one, and then the result of both is grace. She comes to you, young men, as she came to us when we were young: some of you will put your life into her hands, as some of us did, whose hair is gray, and she will lead you forth into peace and joy. Some will refuse, and go for a short life and a merry one, and they will get the brevity but miss the mirth, and be dead at forty, though for twenty or thirty years after they may still remain unburied. Byron was a dead carcass long before he went out to the Greeks.

All this, in all these ways, as it comes to us from our infancy to our prime, is only the outward and visible part of a patience, or want of it, that touches the whole deeper life of the heart and soul, and makes the most awful or the most celestial difference to our whole being.

This is true, first, of our relation to one another. The very last thing most of us can learn of our relations to each other is to let Patience have her perfect work. Very few fathers and mothers learn the secret this angel is waiting to tell them about their children until perhaps the last is born. It is probable that he will give more trouble than any one of the others: If his own bent is not that way, the big margin he gets, when we are aware this is really the Benjamin, is likely to make that all right: we bear with him as we never bore with the first. Then love and duty were the motive powers; now it is love and patience. We would fain undo something now we have done to the elder ones, and the young rogue reaps all that advantage; and then the angel, by this time, has had her way, if Solomon, with his wicked axiom about sparing the rod and spoiling the child, has no more weight with us than he ought to have. She has shown us what power and grace are under the shadow of her wings, and how in each of these little ones we have another life to deal with, that is only fairly to be brought out to its brave, strong beauty, as the season brings out the apples and corn. Patience is the only angel that can work with love. To refuse her blessing is to refuse God's holiest gift, after what he has given us in the child's own being. I think the day is yet to dawn when fathers and mothers will feel that they would

rather scourge themselves as the old anchorites did, than scourge their little ones ; and will not doubt that they, and not the child, deserve it, when they feel like doing it. I suppose there is not an instance to be found of a family of children coming up under an unflinching and unfailing patience and love turning out badly ; the angel prevailing with us prevails with the child for us, and turns our grace to its goodness. The fruit ripens at last all right, if we have the grace to let the sun shine on it, and to guard it from the destroyer. All the tendencies of our time to give children the right to have a great deal of their own way, are good tendencies, if we will understand that their own way is of course the right way, as certainly as a climbing vine follows the turn of the sun : all we have to do is carefully and patiently to open the right way for them wherever they turn.

Patience, again, must have her perfect work in our whole relation to our fellow men. It is very sad to read of the shameful things that have been done in the name of Religion, for the sake of conformity : how the fagot has burned, and the rack has wrung. We cannot believe that we could ever do that, and very likely we never should ; yet we are, most of us, inquisitors in our way, and want to force human beings into conformity with the idea that we have of fitness, though it may not be theirs at all.

It is reported that the flitch of bacon at Dunmore, in Essex, is hardly ever claimed. It is a noble piece of meat, you know, always ready, with ribbons for decorations, and no little rustic honor besides, for the man and woman that have been married a year, and can say, solemnly, that their life, the whole twelvemonth, has been a perfect accord. Only once in many years is it claimed, though to many an Essex peasant it must look very tempting. The loss lies in the fact that they did not take this angel with them, and make her the equal of love. They imagine that love is omnipotent, and can guard them from that sharp word. Love very often leads them on to it, since love, they know, is justified of love ; but when all hope of the flitch is lost, if they are true and good, the angel comes, and stays, and has her way. If they

are neither, it is brute and victim, with no hope of even the questionable mercy that comes here through the divorce court.

Want of patience, indeed, apart from the vilest reasons, must be the main cause for the dreadful rank growth of this evil weed of divorce in our social life. There are, no doubt, instances in which to be divorced is the most sacred thing men and women can do. Many a woman must do this to save her life. She is tied to a beast that will crush her to death, and that is her escape. And many a man must do it to save his soul. It was a woman he thought he was wedding: he finds the old Greek fable, of something with a fair woman's face, but not a woman, was true; and she would drag him down to her den, if he could not get free.

But these are, on both sides, the rather rare exceptions. Trace the most of these sad things to the well-head, and it is want of patience, each with the other, that has made all the mischief, and what each will call, in their blind fury, an infernal temper, is this devil of impatience, which has taken the place of the good angel who would have saved them if they had welcomed her as they ought, and let her have her way. If they did love each other once, they will never find such blessing as could come to them, with patience as the aid to their affections. Human souls have an imperial quality in them; a turn for insisting on being master; and when they come so close together as husband and wife, and love recovers his sight, as he will, Patience must take up her part and adjust the thing by a constitution of equal rights, and by an equal giving up of rights, or, in spite of love, there will come infinite trouble.

We have very much the same thing to learn in our relation to each other in the whole length and breadth of our life. Ministers with their people, and people with their ministers; employers with their servants, and servants with their employers; men in their dealings with men, and women in their judgments of women. We would all be very much more careful in what we say and do, if, when we pray, we should say, "Our Father, give us grace to let thine angel have her

perfect work, to guide and keep us till we reach the line at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue; and then, if the storm must come, make it like the lightning that cuts its quick way through the clogged and dead atmosphere, only to restore and bless, to set all birds singing a new song, and deck the world with a new beauty,"—that would be a blessed prayer.

For, finally, there must be a divine impatience, too. Jesus Christ felt it now and then; but you have to notice that it is never with weakness or incompleteness, or even folly or sin; for all these he had only forbearance and forgiveness, and pity and sympathy. What roused him, and made his heart throb, and his face glow, and his voice quiver with a divine indignation, was the hollow pretence and ugly hypocrisy he had to encounter, and the judgments one man made of another out of his from a sense of superior attainment. That is our right, as much as it was his right, as we grow towards his great estate. I have seen an impatience as divine as ever patience can be; but this is needed only now and then, and can only come safely and truly to the soul in which her great sister has her perfect work. The perfectly patient man is always justified in all his outbreaks. Nobody blames the flaming sword; or the quick stroke home that comes from a noble forbearance, any more than we blame the thunderbolts of the Lord.

Last of all, for this angel of Patience we must cry to Heaven. One of the old pagan kings would not let the sage go, who came and told him that when passion was like to be his master, he would do well, before he gave way, to recite to himself all the letters of the alphabet. The counsel seemed so admirable, that the king cried, "I cannot do without you." It was only a dim pagan shadow of the sheen of the patient angel as the apostle sees her. There she sits, the bright, good servant of the Most High, ready to help all who cry to him. The good servant that, through untold ages, wrought at this world to make it ready for our advent; laying together, an atom at a time, this wonderful and beautiful dwelling-place, with all these stores of blessing in mine



and meadow, mountain and vale ; then when her great charge came, she was waiting for him, to nurse and tend him, own sister of faith, and hope, and love, and twin sister of mercy ; tireless, true, and self-forgetful, anxious only for her charge, and never to leave us, if we will let her have her perfect work, until, through all hinderance, she leads us through the golden gate, over which is written, " Here is the patience of the saints ; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus ;" then she will have her perfect work, and we shall be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

## XIV.

*The Two Mites.*

MARK xii. 43, 44 : " Jesus said, This poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury : for all they did cast in of their abundance ; but she of her want."

IN speaking to you briefly about this little personal history, I want you to notice, first, the difference between what this widow must have thought of her gift, and what the world thinks of it after almost two thousand years have come and gone. You can see, as you read the passage, that the words of Christ were not meant for her, but for those about him. He speaks after she has gone. It is very probable that she never heard of it as long as she lived, and not improbable that if she had heard of it, she would have minded it no more than any good and regular church-member now would mind what was said by one whom she considered heretical, dangerous, and not to be believed in. So she cannot have had the faintest suspicion that her gift would be remembered five minutes after it was given, or, if anybody noticed it, that they could possibly look at it as any more than the very poor gift of a very poor woman ; and yet here it is, in its bare poverty, outshining the most generous giving the world has ever known. There is nothing like it that I know of in the Bible or out of it. A divine word has made gift and giver immortal. There she stands with her half cent, in the sunlight of heaven, as the

generations come and go, incorruptible, undefiled, and never to fade away. Those disciples who were to give us the Gospels, caught the words as they were said : " I say unto you, this poor widow hath cast in more than they all ; for all they did cast in of their abundance, but she, out of her want, did cast in all her life ;" and they could never forget them if they tried : then, when the Gospels had to be written, this must go in. It could no more be left out, than the great historic ruby can be left out of the English crown. Then the Gospels began to be read in distant places : Greece got them, and Rome, and Egypt, and Spain, Britain, and France, and Germany, and wherever they went the woman went, standing in the splendor of the divine words, so millions at last saw, what was seen at first by two or three, and still the glory grew : your fathers and mine, so long as we can trace them, saw what we see ; and when we are dead and gone, our children will still see the widow standing with her two mites casting them into the store of the Lord, and then going back to her home, and beginning again, perhaps, to save two mites more. We turn over the same great book, and read how David and Solomon gathered their treasures, and gave them with generous hands for noble purposes ; and how the people brought their gifts, when their hearts were stirred, and gave them freely for their temples and shrines, for worship, and patriotism, and charity ; but we see nothing like this,—nothing that so touches the heart. " She, out of her want, did cast in of her life," and eternal life has come to her here on the earth ; her giving has been her saving, and that half cent has brought millions of money to noble uses.

Again, we must not fail to notice that this divine word leaves us in no sort of doubt as to the reason why the poor gift should be what it was, in comparison with those which were intrinsically so much greater. Men seemed to give then, as they still give, with a vast generosity for good objects ; and this treasury had two great purposes—the care of the temple, and the relief of the poor ; both good, and both well cared for by the good men and women of that day ; and Jesus saw what they gave ; he was watching them. It is possible that he had been very much interested that day in the whole matter ; may

have gone again and again to watch, wonderfully moved and attracted by this sight of the givers and their gifts; and I think that I can see what he saw when he stood there that day, and can follow his thought a little way as I follow his eyes: the people pass the chest, each is dropping what answers to each nature, and then passing out of sight and out of mind, all except this widow.

Here comes a merchant; the times are hard, he tells you; nothing doing, taxes heavy, losses large, and things so bad generally, that you have to say, What a misfortune it must be to be a merchant. But you have to notice that his chariot is of the latest style, and by the best maker; his robes of the finest texture and color; his diamonds of the purest water; and, altogether, for a man in such hard trial, he looks very well. Yesterday, he looked over his accounts; he will not tell you what he saw there, but, certainly, he did not seem any worse for the sight. This morning, before he goes to his store, he will go to the temple; he will be thankful, to the extent of offering a lamb; and then there is a little balance, when all is done, that he would like to drop into the treasury. A little balance! but it would buy all that widow has in this world,—the hut she lives in, all the furniture, and all the garments she has to keep her from the cold. Very low the priest, who stands by the chest that day, bows to the generous gift; the holy man would be horrified if you told him he was worshipping a golden idol, but it is true for all that. Then the great merchant passes on, and you see him no more; he has given out of his abundance; he will not need to deny himself one good thing for what he has given. If a new picture strikes his fancy, he will ask the price, and then say, "Send that round to my house;" he will have his venison, all the same, whether it is a sixpence a pound or a dollar; and at the end of the year he will have his balance undamaged, in spite of the hard times. He has given out of his abundance; but, considering the abundance, he has not given as the widow did.

Then there comes a lady. You can see that she is not looking well, and the world goes hard. This has been a hard year ~~for her~~. She has had to give parties, and attend parties; to

dress, and dance, and smile when she wanted to weep; and lose her rest, and be a slave that the slaves themselves, if they had any sense of what she is, and has to do, might pity. The season is over, and now she must think of her soul,—her poor soul. She must repent in dust and ashes; go to the temple; give to the poor, and to the support of the true faith; and altogether, lead a new life. It is the most exquisite “make up” of dust and ashes on the avenue that morning. She sweeps on in her humility, gathering her garments of penitence about her, lest even a fringe should touch the beggar at the gate. She stops a moment to give her gift; low bows the priest again as she passes, and she takes her place among the women, and says her prayers, and her soul is shriven. May we venture to watch her back to her home, and see the luxury that waits her? Is there one jewel, or one robe the less for what she has given? or one whim the less gratified, when the time for penitence is over, and the season opens? I see no sign of that. I never hear her say, “This and that I will forego, that I may give.” She has given of her abundance; she simply purchased a new luxury, and got it cheap, and she fades out of sight and out of life.

You see others come with better gifts, not so much, it may be, in mere money value, but more in those pure eyes that are watching that day, not for the amount of the gifts, but for their meaning. A decent farmer follows the fine lady, forehanded, and full of industry. His crops have done well; his barns are full; his heart is open. He has come to the city to sell his produce; has sold it well, and is thankful, and he will make his offering of two doves in the temple, and give something for the sacred cause, and to the poor besides, because his heart is warm and grateful, and, as he says, he will never feel what he gives to God and the poor; there will be plenty left at the farm when this is given; and then who knows but that the Lord will give a greater blessing next year, for does not the wise book say, “He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he giveth shall be rendered to him again”? So it is at once a free gift, and in some way, a safe investment. He is glad to give the

money, and yet to feel that this is not the last of it. Very pleasantly the holy man smiles on him too, as he drops his shekels and passes on ; he has been there before ; he will come again. He is one of those fast friends who can always be counted on to give while the fruitful fields answer to the diligent hand. He is a sort of country connection to these commissioners of the Most High, and will always be received, as he is to-day, with grace and favour.

And very low indeed the good man bows to that stately centurion who comes now. He is not a member of this church ; indeed, he is not a member of any church ; for, like all his nation of that rank, he thinks that all churches are very much alike, and none of them of much account, except as managers of the common people. But it is a good thing to keep in with them ; there is no knowing what you may want ; and so he comes now and then, and looks on at the service, tosses his Roman gold into the chest, nods and smiles to the cringing priest, and feels that he has done well.

Then with all these come the good and sincere men and women, with not much to spare, but who make a conscience of giving, and manage to get an education for their children, and everything decent ; who never want any simple and wholesome thing they need, and are able to lay up a little beside for a rainy day ; as various as they are now, they were then, who would do something for these things which to them were so sacred ; and it was when givers like these came, that the widow came with her two mites—the smallest matter, possibly, that anybody ever thought of giving. I think if she was like most women, the utter littleness of what she had to spare, would be a shame to her ; she would be tempted, on the mere ground of her womanly pride, to say, "Since I cannot give more, I will not give anything: to put in these two mites when others are pouring in their gold and silver, will only show how poor I am." So it was like giving her life to give so little ; and yet these two mites that meant so little to the treasury, meant a great deal to her. They meant darkness, instead of a candle on

a winter's evening ; a pint of milk, or a fagot of sticks, or a morsel of honey, or a bit of butter, or a bunch of grapes, or a pound of bread. They meant something to be spared out of the substance and essence of her simple and spare living. And this these wise and loving eyes saw at a glance. Jesus knew that the two mites were all she had ; and so as they made their timid tinkle in the coffer, they outweighed all the gold. He saw what they came to, because he saw what they cost, and so his heart went with the two mites ; and while the holy man, who had made such deep obeisance for the larger gifts, let this trifle pass unnoticed, Christ caught up the deed and the doer, and clad them both in the shining robes of immortal glory.

And this incident naturally suggests, first, that there may be more splendor in some obscure thing we never stop to notice, and would not care for if we did, than there is in the things that dazzle our sight and captivate our hearts.

We have all had to notice this among children. In homes where there are plenty of children, there is almost sure to be one who will do things that cost the life, run all the errands, make all the sacrifices, and bear all the real sorrows, but beyond that be a little nobody ; plain, probably, and small, not brilliant, never appearing to any advantage—if she is of that sex, as very generally happens—beside her more brilliant sisters ; “ a good little thing,” the whole family says, and takes all the rest as a matter of course, expecting the service and sacrifice as something that comes in the course of nature. This is the two-mite child of the family ; the small piece of home heroism, of a worth surpassing all the gifts and graces of the household besides ; the little one that Christ would see if he came and sat down in the house, and would call his own ; and while we would want to see him notice those we are perhaps proud of for their beauty or brightness, he would say, “ Suffer this little one to come unto me, and forbid her not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,—she gives more than they all.”

We notice this again in the church. Some naturally attract

and win applause by their gifts. The eyes of the church are on them ; their Christian life is a sort of ovation, a triumphal procession, and their ten talents tell wonderfully as they ring down into the treasury of the temple. Others, again, attract no more attention than this widow with her two mites. There is very little that they can do, and yet they do that little at a cost the rest can hardly imagine. They say their poor word, feeling all the while it is so very poor that it cannot make much matter, but they must say it, for that is their duty. They do their bit of work, and a very poor piece it is, as everybody can see ; but it is the best they can do, and it has come out of their life. It is their sorrow that they cannot do more, but it is the joy of heaven they do so much, and they, and not the brilliant and talented, are the true great givers ; it is the unseen and unnoticed heroism of Christian men and women that feeds the fires of goodness, and wins the well-done of the Lord. Those who have great gifts and graces, and offer them generously for sacred uses, are honored and blessed, if what they do is done with sweet sincerity. But it is those who have but a small gift, and give that at a cost the gifted cannot measure, whom the eyes of Christ rest upon with the tenderest light, and of whom he says, "These give more than ye all."

And this that is true of the home and the church, is true of the whole life we are living. There are men who will some day win good places in the world, attract attention to what they do, win applause and honor for their deeds, but who may really be doing better now, when nobody knows or notices, than they will do then, because what they are doing now demands more self-sacrifice than they will ever think of in their greater estate. And there are tens of thousands in this nation, whom we never heard of, and never shall, whose deeds, weighed in these divine balances that weighed the widow's two mites, prove them to be more heroic in the heart and soul of heroism than the vast majority of those we have sung about and wept over,—the brilliant and attractive characters who gave out of their abundance, when these did cast in their life. Then, again, we cannot be in any doubt as to what lies at

the heart of this word of Christ, or what led him to cast that glory on a poor, desolate woman, and give her precedence over not merely the pomp and vanity, but the real grace and generosity of those who came with her. It was an illustration to him, and he will make it one to us, of this law of our life, that the most Godlike deed is that which belongs to the sacrifices we make, giving for sacred things and causes that which costs us most, and is most indispensable, and yet is given back to God. Nothing was worth a thought in this poor thing's gift but the sacrifice it cost her to give. Her two mites were as worthless, for any outside uses, as the smallest coin we can muster now would be in this church and in the Citizen's Relief Society: The whole worth of it lay in that piece of her very life which went with it; but that made the two mites instantly outweigh the whole sum of silver and gold cast in by the wealthy, which cost nothing, beyond the effort to give what a very natural instinct would prompt them to keep. They gave of their fulness, she of her emptiness; they of their strength, she of her weakness; they of their plethora, she of her hunger; they of the ever-springing fountain, she the last drop in her cup. It was not the sum, but the sacrifice that made the deed sublime, and set the doer, in her rusty old weeds, among the glorious saints and angels.

Surely this must tell us what it did to these that stood by the Messiah. The principle now is exactly the same as it was then, as certainly as any principle governing matter in natural laws. The young man may say, "I am willing to do my share for sacred causes and institutions;" but if he means by that, he will aid them after he gets all his parties, and operas, and sleigh-rides, and everything besides that his heart can wish,—the gift for which he will not deny himself the least of these things, must be before Heaven less than the least. And the man of business may say, "I will help; the Lord has been good to me, I will be grateful;" if gratitude takes the form of that he can well spare, and yet spare nothing out of his life. But after he has purchased with the talents God gave him as a steward everything for himself that he can possibly need, then he really spares



nothing, makes no sacrifice, gives only out of his abundance, and is still open to that touch of fear, that he may not even be dealing fairly with the Principal who has committed the talents to his trust; the fear, which good old brother Cecil used to say, always gathers about stewards and agents that grow uncommonly rich. So may we all give, no matter what we are, a poor selvage out of the web in our ample and voluminous robes; give the crusts after we have eaten the dinner; spare in the Lent what we could not spend in the Carnival,—and it will be the same to every one of us. The wise all-seeing Eyes will see us, and what we are doing, and the angel will write in his book of life, “He gave to God and good uses what he did not need himself for any uses.” Or we may give out of the real substance; but if we do not give with a real sacrifice, I have no authority from the Lord to say that the poorest Irish washerwoman in this town who gives to the Lord, according to her light, her two mites, which make one farthing, gives it out of her life to say a mass, even for the soul of her wretched sot of a husband who was found dead in the Bridewell,—does not take infinite precedence of the best and most generous who have all they want, and then do ever so nobly out of the rest.

For, once more, it is in its own way a piece of the grossest infidelity to presume that this incident at the old temple gates, that still stands out radiant in the light of heaven, was a chance observation, which might just as soon have been missed as not, and there had been no such lesson. Believe me, this cannot be true. The conjunction of the great stars is not more inevitable in the heavens than was this gathering to that sight and hearing on Zion. It was no chance that might or might not be; it was in the divine order, that we might be left in no doubt about this touching and deep-reaching truth. For so God will have us learn through his Son and an old widow woman who was moved in her poor soul to go out that day with her two mites, this holy and awful law of sacrifice, as it reaches into such things as **these**,—these common duties of being on the side of God in

what we spare for the things that build up his cause or aid his children.

It was another lesson, indeed, that we learn, in this simple and most obvious way, of that whole world of grace and truth that culminates on Calvary. It is sacrifice in its uttermost simplicity, in words, as it were, of one syllable, fitted for babes in Christ. No more may we presume that there is not the divine observation of the human action on this lake shore that there was on that mountain top. The human eyes of Christ, as they looked with such tenderness on that sight, these human eyes were but the organisms through which God was watching, and the judgment pronounced when the deeds were done was from the judgment-seat of the Most High. So it is for ever and ever. The divine eyes are watching us, with or without the human organism, and the words are said about us all sorrowfully when we are selfish and small, sweetly when we are self-forgetful and self-sacrificing. You may make a sacrifice, and feel very sad you could not do more, and go home when it is made, feeling that the thing is not worth a thought, and be glad to forget it yourselves, and only to remember the great gifts of the rich and generous, yet shall the last be first, and the least greatest. You shall say, Lord, when did I give two mites which make one farthing? and he shall say, You gave it at such a time, and went without such a piece of your life, that you might be able; and these shall say, That was when I gave my shekels; now will the Lord surely say, here is a crown of glory, and they shall cry out, "See what I gave, what I did at that very time;" and he shall say, It is not here; the angel has not made any record of it; it must have been out of your abundance; and we never reckon here the cup that was filled out of the ocean.

And if you say, we know all this already, and you have told us very much the same things before, I must still put you back, dear friends, on your own inner sense of what is right, and remind you of Paul's great word: "If thine heart condemn thee, God is greater than thine heart, and knoweth all things." If your heart has nothing to say about your duty to do more

and to be more, and you know it is alive to the work God gives us all to do, then I am dumb. I want you only to put yourselves in the line of this holy and beautiful thing, this gem in the setting of the Gospels, to be sure that your gift to God is the gift of a part of yourself in everything you are called to give.

## XV.

## Old Age.

PHIL. 9: "Such an one as Paul the aged."

OLD age is the repose of life,—the rest that precedes the rest that remains. It is the Seventh day, which is the Sabbath of a whole lifetime, when the tired worker is bidden to lay aside the heavy weight of his care about this world,—to wash himself of its dust and grime, and walk about with as free a heart as a forehanded farmer carries into his fields of a Sunday afternoon, at the end of harvest. For "old age should be peaceful," Dr. Arnold says, "as childhood is playful; hard work at either extreme of life is out of place. You must labor in the hot sun of noon, but the evening should be quiet and cool. It is the holy place of life, the chapel of ease for all men's weary labors."

But it has been the misfortune of old age to be generally unwelcome, with some noble exceptions among those who can see how nature never makes a mistake about time. The aged would rather be younger, and the young admire most in the old what they call their youthfulness; so that, "How young he seems!" is our finest praise of an old man, and "How old I feel!" is very often the old man's most pitiful complaint.

Now and then we come across a beautiful and contented old age, in which those who possess it seem to be aware how good that blessing is which can only come through a long lifetime, and give what their age has brought them. Such persons surprise us that we should ever have been content to admire in any old man or woman merely their poor traces of youth, while much better than youth makes up the substance of

every well-ripened life. It is as if one would persist in admiring the shrivelled petals that linger at the end of an apple, because they retain about them the dim memory of a blossom, and care nothing for the fruit that has come through their withering.

I am not to deny that we can find reason enough if we want it for this idea. There is plenty of evidence, to those that care to hunt for it, on the misfortune of growing old, from that outcry of the heathen, "Those the gods love die young," to the moan of the last man we found weary of his life, but loath to leave it. We can see sometimes in those who are growing old all about us such an isolation, passing at last into desolation, and such utter inability to bear up against the burden of the years, that we pray in our hearts we may be saved from an old age like that. Then we remember how Solomon called these the evil days, when we shall say we have no pleasure in them; and how a great philosopher wrote in the diary of his old age, "Very miserable;" and we can see Milton, sitting in the sun alone, old, blind, stern, and poor; and Wordsworth, walking in his old age by Rydal-water, but no longer conscious of the glory and joy of which he had sung in his prime; and a host besides, to whom old age has brought, as Johnson said, only decrepitude; and then we say with Lamb, "I do not want to be weaned by age, and drop like mellow fruit into the grave." We shrink back at our whitening hairs, and wonder how anybody could ever be so lost to the fitness of things as to call us—except in a sort of splendid jest—the old lady, or the old gentleman. The child longs for and welcomes his boyhood, and the boy the youth, and the youth his manhood. But very few and far between are the men and women who will desire their age, as a servant earnestly desires his shadow, or feel that the white head is a crown of glory, when they see in their own many threads of silver, and cannot hold it up for the burden of the years. In the face of this unbelief in the goodness and blessing of old age, I want to say, that no period of life can be more desirable than this, if it be what every old age ought to be; that old age is the best of all the ages, when it is a good old age, and it ought to be so considered. Such a conviction

as you may well believe who are still young, or in middle life, can only come fairly through a true personal experience ; but this comes of itself : that if life be good as bud and blossom, and in its greenness, and the days when it is ripening, then there is no reason, in the nature of things, why it should not be good when it is fully ripe and waiting to be gathered. If the soil be good, and the sowing, and the seasons, then it is not a thing to mourn about that there should be a harvest. If the preparation and opportunity be good, what is to be said of the consummation? Can that be a thing to lament about, to beat back, a condition so unwelcome that it is polite not to be aware of its presence? I cannot believe in such a termination of these great, sacred processes of life. If it be a misfortune to grow old, it is a misfortune to be born, and to be a child, and youth, and young man, and in our prime. If the rest of our life is meant to be enjoyed, then this must have some better meaning in it than to be endured. It must go up and stand with the rest, or they must come down. Old age is a beautiful consummation, or it is a bitter mistake.

That it is a beautiful consummation, we can sometimes see for ourselves, when we meet some aged person in whose life there is such a bright and sweet humanity, and true love, and restfulness, and grace, that we feel in their presence how a good old age must be desirable after such a life as all men are called to live in this stormy era, when, as the Psalm has it, "They mount up to heaven, and go down again to the depths, and their soul is melted because of trouble." Then "He maketh the storm a calm, and men are glad because they be quiet, so He bringeth them unto their desired haven." And we have all had to contrast an old age like that with another, in which there was no beauty which should cause us to desire it ; restless, suspicious, hard, and graceless ; that has never abandoned its sin, but has been abandoned of it, as the fire abandons burnt-out ashes ; whose threescore and ten years' experience of the world has only gone to confirm their unbelief in it, while they still hug it, and dare not let it go, because when they peer with their poor, pre-occupied eyes into the hereafter, *they can only feel that* "darkness, death, and long despair,

reign in eternal silence there ;” and when we ask what can make such a difference, we reach what I want especially to say,—

I. How to come to a good old age ; and,

II. What then ?

I. And this is to be first, and truly understood, an old age of any sort, is the result of the life I have lived, whatever that has been. That above all outward seeming, or even inward feeling, is that solid, solemn sentence, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” I can live so well, that at seventy earth and heaven together shall say, “I am such an one as Paul the aged.” Yet from exceeding self-distrust and want of the instant power to trust in God, I may not feel this at all, but look back on the way I have come, and say, “Better I had never been born than to live to so little purpose.” Or I may shake at the impending change, at that other life into which the young *may* go soon, and I *must* go soon, and say, “I toil beneath the curse ; but knowing not the universe, I fear to slide from this to worse.” It is no matter what I feel, any more than it matters that a fruitful summer day shall gather a curtain of thick cloud about it as it sinks to rest, shutting out the shining heavens, and veiling all things in the mist. It has been a fruitful day all the same, and now the substance of it is in every grain of wheat, and in the heart of every apple within the zone, and its incense has gone into the heavens before it, so the fruitfulness abides and its blessing rises, and the sun and moon would stand still, sooner than that should be lost.

On the other hand, my life may have been worthless as withered leaves, selfish and self-seeking since the day when I cheated my small schoolmate swapping marbles ; hard to man, base to woman, abject to power, haughty to weakness, earthly, sensual, devilish. Yet, in my last days, the very selfishness that has been the ruling passion of my life, may lead me to grasp the delusion that another can bear my sin, and then lift me instantly into Paradise ; and the good of feeling that the last bargain I have made, and the last advantage I have gained, is the best, may make me pass out of life, in the

euthanasia of self-deception, into the pit. It is no matter what I feel, what I have done, if my life has been like that, it determines what I shall be. Angels, no more than men, "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles;" and when they come to the gathering because the harvest is ripe, they will gather what there is.

There is one so-called religious tract, once in general circulation, and considered among the best, which seems to me to be blank blasphemy. It is that remarkable narrative written from what Burnet wrote of the last days of Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, the most profligate man, after his master, Charles II., of that era. He was an old man through his vices, at thirty-four, and at the point of death was worn out utterly, and his mind was also much decayed, as his biographer says in the *Encyclopædia*. It was then that Burnet was called to see him, was attracted to him, as the result shows, partly by the pity of a noble heart, and partly by the hope of bringing so notorious a sinner (who was also an infidel and an earl) into the church. The result was, that he died, as it is believed, made clean through the atoning blood, and was taken straight to heaven, because our Protestantism leaves us no alternative but that or hell, and divides the places, and hopes and despairs of them, by a razor-edged dogma, this way and that.

Now let me never be suspected of trying to limit the infinite mercy. "O, praise the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." That Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, has been or will be saved, I doubt no more than I doubt my own existence. The ultimate fact I do not doubt; the instant application of it, in that way, I utterly deny. What! make that man an angel of light, and clean from all sin, there and then, while women he had ruined were walking through London streets down to hell! set him singing at the foot of the great white throne, without a care, while mothers, whose daughters were lost through him, were weeping, heart-broken, in their blighted homes! when the whole life of England was baser because he had lived in it! when his poems and songs were only just starting out to sow their evil seeds through the long generations until now! I tell you that is

blasphemy. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," whether the harvest be gathered here or yonder. I get what I give. So, then, what I feel in my old age may be a very small matter. Wilmot was very happy; Luther, on the whole, was very miserable. He said, that rather than have much more of life, he would throw up his chance at Paradise, and felt every day, after he was fifty what such a one as Paul, the aged, meant, when he said, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." What I am, is the great thing; the feeling may answer to the fact or it may not; that depends upon a great many matters that never disturb eternal verities at all.

Now, what I am from sixty to seventy, is the sum of what I have been from sixty back to sixteen. I have been getting together, letter by letter, and page by page, that which, good or bad, is now stereotyped, and stays so. Talking once with a friend who had been very sick, he told me that one remarkable fact in his sickness, while he was unconscious of all that went on about him, was the coming back of his life like a succession of pictures. Things that he had long forgotten, that were buried down deep in the past, came up again one by one, and were a part of himself. It was a dim intimation of what we have all been led to suspect from our own experience,—that things are not lost but laid away, everything in its own place; and it is but another side of what I have tried to show you by a figure—our thoughts and deeds are the words and pages in the Book of Life. Slowly we gather them together, page by page, and when old age comes the story is told. Letters may be missing then, and words here and there obscure; but the whole meaning and spirit of it, the hardness and falsehood, or the tenderness and truth and love, the tenor and purpose of it, are then all to be read. It is noble or base. It will inspire or dishearten. It may be the life of a king like George the Fourth of England, in which there is not a line that the world would not gladly forget, or the life of a cobbler like John Pounds, who lived in the kingdom under that king, and out of his poverty lured with little gifts the poorest children in Plymouth to his small



shanty, that he might teach them to read ; and better things besides, giving his whole life for their salvation, whatever it be. I would not dare to say one word of old age before this,—that the most certain thing about it is, it is the solid result of a lifetime. It is no matter how we may feel who have to face it, that is what must abide at the heart of it, and be the warp and woof.

This brings me to say again, what may seem to have been left doubtful as I have tried to state this first thing,—that there is a line to be drawn, on the one side of which any man may look forward to an old age full of contentment, but on the other, if we take it, only of misery. It is that line which runs between what inspires the life and soul, and what merely exhausts it ; what perishes in the doing or the using, and what abides for ever ; the fashion of this world that passes away, and the spirit of that which is as fresh and full for ever, as the sea is of water, or the sun of fire.

There is a dull, heavy book I read sometimes, for one great lesson that I find in it—the Life of James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine. His life opened into sickness, and almost constant pain, and such heavy depression of the heart and mind, that when he was thirty-four, he writes, “ I greatly doubt whether the silent mansion of the grave is not the happiest place.” There, we naturally say, if he do not die young, or get into his nature some vast compensation of religious feeling, is the making of a miserable old man ; or, even if he be religious, he may become one of that unhappy number we are always meeting, who has a great deal of religion, but no rest. Well, Scott met him in a company when he was in his eighty-second year, and wondered at his cheerful presence, and how he was at home with everybody about him, talking to every one in a select company of the best men in Scotland with the keenest interest in what interested that particular man. Jeffrey had seen him a year before, and says he never saw him in his life more animated, instructive, and delightful. Campbell passed a day with him when he was nearly eighty-three, and says, “ It was one of the most amusing and instructive days of my whole life.” Another writes of this time, that he

was telling a Swedish artist how to make the best brushes for painting, and this lady how to cure her smoky chimney, and that one how to obtain fast colors for her dresses, and teaching a child how to play on the jews-harp, and how to make a dulcimer, and was altogether an inexhaustible fountain of interest and instruction to all that came to him, and only distressed and uneasy when anybody insisted on reminding him what a mighty work he had done in his long lifetime.

Now, I ask what made this vast alteration between James Watt at thirty-four and at eighty-three, and hear some such answer as this: James Watt did dutifully what God set him to do on this earth, not caring so much for the profit or the praise his deed might bring, as that the work should be well done. That was one thing. The other was, that what he did, though it was only the perfecting of the steam engine, he wrought for a pure purpose of God, and for the help of humanity. It was a part of that great plan, of which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the perfect crown—the glory of God and the salvation of men. That glory was only made greater by the application of steam, through law, to machinery; and humanity was only blessed by the lifting away of one of its burdens. But it was a divine work, in its degree, and it brought a divine reward. So the dutiful life, through sickness, depression, and pain, brought a restful and noble old age, into which, while one by one his old friends left him, and he felt his own feet touch the chill of the great river, the consolations of God came pouring plentifully, banished all fear, and made him feel, as one has said, how “age is but the shadow of death, cast where he standeth in the radiant path of immortality.”

And this is the preparation for a good old age: Duty well done, for its own sake, for God's sake, and for the sake of the commonwealth of man. When a man works only for himself, he gets neither rest here, nor reward hereafter. When I work for myself, and live for myself, I exhaust myself; but when I work for others, wisely and well, I work for God too; and for my work I get that bread which cometh down from heaven. And duty can find an infinite outcome. It can nurse a sick

child, or teach a healthy one. It can be John Pounds or John Milton. It can found the firms and factories, that are the roots of civilization, and the schools and churches and libraries, that are its life's blood. In all these ways, and all others, the preparation for a good old age is my duty unselfishly done, trusting in God, and living purely.

II. I said, when old age comes what then? The preparation for it is a pure life, and faithfulness to duty now. What comfort and advantage can come to it, and abide through it, until I die! If I may take such instances as I have met with in life, or in books, or have thought of as possible, I want, when I come to be an old man, to feel and to act something like this: First of all, I will try to make the best of it; not the best of what is bad at the best, as some seem to think, but of what is, if I will but understand it, the best of my whole life, because it is the last.

So that, if I should be favored then to feel clear and strong, and this organism, through which the spirit works, shall serve me, I will remember what good there was at eighty-three in a man like James Watt, and how Solon said that after sixty a man was not worth much, but himself lived to be over fourscore for all that, and at fourscore did the very best work of his life. I will then muster with these all the grand old men, away back to such a one as Paul the aged, whose age has brought its own peculiar power, and made the world glad they were spared so long to be such a blessing, and so I will keep on as they did, not permitting my best friend to cheat me out of the count of my years because I am still active, but will carry it all to the account and the advantage of my old age, and the blessing that may abide in that.

But if it be otherwise, and long before I have to go through the river the eye grows dim, and the fires abate, and a grasshopper becomes a burden, and the tramp a shuffle, and I have the grace to see, what people may be too kind to say, that my active days are over, and I had better have done; then I will try to see also how this is the best that can happen, because it is the kind, good Master taking out of my hand the hammer I were otherwise loath to lay down, and

putting out the fire, in which I should only potter, and waste material, and saying to me in, this good, wise way, "Now sit down a while, until it is time to go. You have wrought long enough. Rest and be quiet." And then please, God, I will not break out into that shameful lamenting I have heard from old men, about "the tender light of a day that is gone, that can never come back to me, and powers and appetites withered away."

Perhaps, even, I will rise so high as to thank God it is so, and that the passions and appetites I have had to watch like wild beasts sometimes, are tamed at last, and I am free to be, in some poor measure, as the angels of God. I do think, indeed, that such outcries as we hear and read about the blight that comes to age in the loss of its powers, are as unreasonable and unpardonable as anything that can be thought of. I can think of nothing now that I shall more earnestly desire when, as Paul the aged said, "the outward man perishes," than that the inward man should be so renewed, day by day, as to make me feel there is no loss, but a gain, in that, because there is a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," where mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

Then another thing which I want to be sure about, when that time comes, is, that the world is not rushing headlong into destruction because I am no longer guiding it. It may be cause, or it may be effect, I can never quite tell which; but I have noticed it is one of the keenest miseries of a restless old age, that it is quite convinced everything is going wrong, and getting worse and worse, from the little grandchild, who is not at all what his grandfather was seventy years ago, to the vast and solemn interests of the nation, going, beyond redemption, to ruin. It was this which made that misery in Luther's later life, of which I have spoken. He was sure the world was given over to the Evil One. His last letters speak of life as utterly hopeless. "The world," he said, "is bent on going to the devil." "It is like a drunken peasant." "Put him on his horse on one side, and he tumbles over on the other; take him in whatever way you will, you cannot help him." Now, the evil with Luther

dated back many years before this, when he would not trust our common humanity in as reasonable a request as it ever made, but took the side of the nobles against the peasants, and with his own hand tried to put back the clock of the Reformation.

It is one of the qualities of the most restful and joyful old age, that it believes in the perpetual incoming of the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. And so its heart is full of belief and hope in the new time and the new generation. "The former times," such old men say, "were not better than these, and I was not better than my grandson." Like Paul the aged, such an old age is not sure it shall see the coming kingdom and power and glory, but it is sure it is to come, so that infancy is to it a perpetual prophecy; and the old man can always take the young babe, and cry, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It is one of the best blessings of a good old age, that it can believe in a good new age which it has helped to bring in, and in which it is permitted to stay for a little while, and welcome it. Such a one as Paul the aged is always quiet about that. Then I shall hope to realize how wonderful is this great, faithful Providence, which, since I can first remember, has wrought such marvels in the earth; how men and nations are in the hand of God. And while age will make my religious ideas so unalterable that, if one shall come as directly from God as Christ did, with a new Gospel, I shall not be able to give up this for that, I shall be able to feel that all the differences of good, true men are included within the great harmonies of God.

But all this, and all else, can only come in one way. In a wise little book, given me lately, on the art of prolonging life, the author says that in old age the system should have more generous nourishment. It is the correlative of a truth about the soul. Say what we will,—

**"Except we are growing pure and good,  
There can be no good in growing old.  
It is a path we would fain avoid if we could;  
And it means growing ugly, suspicious, and cold."**

God help us if, as we are growing older we do not grow better, and do not nourish our souls on the most generous thoughts and aspirations.

A noble German thinker speaks of his intention to store up, for his death-day, whatever is best in all he has thought and read. I would not wait for that day. I would have my store ready, when, some time after sixty, I begin to feel the first chill of the cold waters, and then feed my heart on it all the way along to the end. The great promises of the sacred books, the faith in the fatherhood that was in Christ, the joyful hope that rings through great poems, like that of Wordsworth on Immortality, and Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and this wonderful work of "Jean Paul" which I have just mentioned. Then the winter of my life shall not be the winter of my discontent. I will take a lesson even from the little creatures that hide in the woods, that in bright summer weather make their store-house, and in the autumn lay up their store; then, when the storms sweep through their sylvan homes, and the frost and snow turn the great trees into pillars of ice, live snug and warm among their kind, and wait for the new spring.

"Grow old, then, cheerily;  
The best is yet to be  
The last of life, for which the first was made.

"Our times are in His hand,  
Who saith, A whole I planned;  
Youth shows but half trust—  
God sees all;  
Nor be afraid."

## XVI.

*At the Soldiers' Graves.*

ISA. lxi. 3: "Beauty for ashes."

WE gather, to-day, from our great city, in this city of the dead, for a noble purpose. It is, that the tender grace may rest on us that rests on the dust of the men who died to save us; and that we may strew flowers on their graves, not so much for a token that we will not forget them, as for a sign that they may not forget us.

It is a good time to meet for this purpose just as the spring is passing into summer, and the full bloom of the world is about us, to make this the symbol of the feeling that is in our hearts for those who went forth as spring was opening into summer in their lives, and gave them to their country.

And this fitness in the time is the more fitting from the fact that this day falls on a Sunday. It is the first time we have come together in this fashion for this great purpose. It gives another grace to the rite, that it should be done on a day set apart for sacred things. I am glad of the beautiful coincidence. It makes the day to me still more sacred. Indeed I cannot but feel that it would be a vast advantage if the time we give to this sacrament of the flowers could always be a Sunday. If on this holy day we could close our churches with one consent all over the land, gather in the cemeteries where these heroes rest, and hold great services of psalm and prayer, with only the arches of heaven for the dome of our temple, then we should have a service that all would be glad to attend, a church from which none would feel excluded, and such a blessing as seldom comes to little synagogues, where we meet for more private devotion.

But simply touching this as something that I devoutly hope may come to pass for the good of the church and the commonwealth alike, I cannot but feel that better still than the time ~~the~~ *the spirit that brings us together and makes us one, as if in*

this great multitude there is one common heart. It is not possible that in the common reaches of life, there should not be a vast difference in the thought and feeling of a multitude like this. I think it best there should be. The dead levels of uniformity on most of the questions that come home to us, are the lurking-places of malaras, and only the mountain ranges of diversity are the fastnesses of health. But as on this summer Sunday the sun draws this whole green world to look up and to drink in his light and fire, so the glory that burns and shines in the deeds of the men who are resting here, and all over the land, and in the sea, draws as the sun draws the world; and as these men were made one in that cause for which they gave their life, we are made one in our loyalty to their dust. When we come here,—though we have never seen the face of one buried beneath these mounds,—we gather about the graves of our brothers and sons. When the youth left his home and his mother to defend his country, he was adopted by the whole motherhood of the republic, and every home made him one of its own. So we cast the flowers on the graves of our kindred; and from this low, green hill, our hearts yearn over the dust of all brave soldiers who fought and fell. It is a consecration that reaches wherever a man is laid whose heart beat for the mighty work God gave us to do in this generation: One great, simple article was their whole creed,—that the American Republic, just as it was then, was good enough to live, and fight, and die for. It is good enough, as we gather here, to make us forget all minor things in their noble sacrifice, and in our thankfulness to God for raising up such men. They died that we might live. They gave their life a ransom for many. So it is well that we should have but one heart as we meet about their graves, and speak of their great devotion.

It has seldom been my lot, in all the years of my ministry, to feel so entirely unequal to any work I have had to do, as I do to-day. As I have thought of the great honor in your request that I should address you, I could not but feel it was all a mistake to select such a man as I am for this work. It is one of the touching things that have come to us from the old time,



that when a man wanted to move a great multitude to do some piece of grace, he stood before them and held a poor stump, from which the hand had gone in defence of their homes. He said no word : he simply bared the maimed limb, and in a moment the multitude was lifted into the grace he sought. So I have thought you had better have done to-day : not to take me, or any man like me, whose work in the strife for which these men fell was so poor and thin, but to take one of your own veterans, a man who, when the trumpet called our nation to battle, went out, and stood fast, fighting for the land ; who endured hardness like a good soldier, until the war was ended, and then, coming back, quietly took his place as a citizen, doing his duty with the smart of his old wounds about him, but never complaining, or thinking that God had given him the harder lot. Such a man might stand mute, or simply say, " These are the graves of my comrades," and then no speech that could be made by the tongue of man beside would ever touch us with an eloquence like that. One mute appeal from a maimed arm, pointed down at these green mounds, if we had eyes to see what the appeal meant, would cover these graves deeper with summer blossoms than they have ever been covered with winter snows. Soldiers of the Republic you cannot suspect what power abides in your broken bodies and shed blood, to shake the heart of every true American. That was the power you should have seized for this great occasion. I went to the battle-field ; you fought on it. I nursed and tended in steamboat and hospital ; but you wrestled with the agonies of wounds I could not feel. God knows my heart was always full of sympathy ; but that could not underreach your pain. All the tales of old heroism I had ever read faded out in the face of your quiet endurance ; and you taught me new lessons of what a man can do, when God helps him, in any strife. The grandest sights I shall ever see on this earth, I saw in your camps and hospitals. It is only my resolution, sacred, I trust, as my life, never to refuse the request of a soldier, that has held me up to stand here, and try to speak to you by the graves of your comrades. My advantage, as I do try, rests in the infinite eloquence of your mere presence. I fall back on

your reserves. Mine is the description ; yours, the demonstration. I can only tell the things that you and yours have done.

And so it cannot be my business, in the light of this confession, to catalogue these deeds as the substance of my poor discourse. They stand in their own strength, and are enshrined in a glory to which my words can add no lustre. Neither can I pretend to touch any lesson for those that have taken part in these great transactions. So long as the chaplain falls back while the soldier fights the battle, I think there is very little room for the chaplain to talk to the soldier, either of duty or glory. I was at the rear when you were at the front what time the thunders and fires of the battle shook the common heart. I will not pretend to come to the front, and let you pass to the rear now, when the battle is over.

But beside the soldier to-day stands the citizen, and I have thought that if I could speak from the soldier to the citizen, I should do all that may become a man in my position. If I can do that, I shall be content.

I want to catch the spirit, if I can, of that great time in which the soldier took the first place, to feel, through its lurid and terrible infoldings, for the divine soul that was in it from first to last. Within a few years the chemist has found the sweetest dye of heaven in that crude oil which springs out of the dark and dismal deeps of the earth. This true transcript of the sky was born in the heart of that darkness. So there is, if we have the wisdom to find it, the light of heaven at the heart of this old trouble through which we have come. And I think we shall find it, if we consider three things that touch us, naturally, as we think of the men whose dust is buried beneath these mounds, and is rising and blending with the glory about us,—that they, and all like them everywhere were :—

- I. The true heroes.
- II. The true Patriots.
- III. The true saviours of this land.

I mention the hero first to mark my sense of the fact, that of these three great things, always to be found in the true citizen-

soldier, this with all its wonderful grace, is the least and lowest, and in the strife of which these graves are mute, but most eloquent witnessess, no man will more readily testify than the soldier himself who hears me, it was the common quality found on both sides. This, indeed, was deeply to be desired, if such a contest was inevitable as that through which we have come. Now that two hundred years have gone, and all the old soreness has gone with the years, the Englishman is proud of the splendid heroism displayed by Puritan and Cavalier alike, and would not, for any price, have it possible that half the great family, when the quarrel came to the solemn arbitration of the sword, should turn out poltroons and cowards. And while it was essential that the Puritan should win in the last battle,—as it always is that heaven should win against hell,—the heroism of those who stood for the wrong is still the grand background to the picture of Ironside and Roundhead standing for the right. They had to come together when the old war was over, and band together for the common good. They could only do that as they felt that each had sterling qualities of heroism which the other was bound to respect. So it is with us to-day, and will be for ever. When the old bitterness has gone out of our hearts, and all the wounds are healed, and we are one nation, we shall be proud of the heroic qualities displayed by so many on the other side, and feel that this heroism is the common possession of the men of our stock. North or South, it makes no difference as to that. Right or wrong, that grand quality abides, and, like the fallen angels in Milton's mighty epic, such traits come out, even in their struggle with the Lord of Hosts, as fill us with a sorrowful respect for such natures, while we utterly condemn the sin that dragged them down.

Now we are coming together. We shall come together; and then when the old pain has gone out, it will be better for us all, and for all the world, that there should be men like Stonewall Jackson on the other side. For Fort Pillow, and Lawrence, and Andersonville, and the Libby, and all such murder and torture, I feel an unutterable loathing. Such things can only be done by the very spawn and refuse of the pit. To be con-

cerned in them, by implication even, is to be blotted out of the book of American life ; but heroism, like this that I speak about, knew nothing of that ; and heroism, I say, was a common quality. A fairer light rests this day on the graves of these heroes because they fell fighting with heroes in battle. And they will one day be friends worthy of our friendship, who were foes worthy of our steel. Our President has done no wiser thing than when, that morning lately, his great antagonist came to see him, soldier to soldier, face to face ; he gave precedence of all the vampires that were seeking some way by which they might fasten on the body politic, and fill their veins from its life. He simply gave precedence to his foe, who wanted now to be a friend, over those that, in the guise of friendship, are to-day the worst foes the country has to encounter.

This, then, is the first truth : we deck the graves of heroes, all the more heroic in that they had to meet their peers in heroism, and conquer them. Dearly, then, we can treasure all beside that brings this noble quality home to our hearts ; can watch them leave their homes, while mothers, and sisters, and wives gather about them, not to hinder, thank God, but to help,—Spartan women, with Christian hearts, battling with their tears, only giving their prayers free course, and their words of deep courage, until the boys were out of sight.

We can think of them in their camps, bracing up their hearts to the strange, new life, with that distant look in their eyes I have seen so many times, telling me the spirit is not there. It has swept over the distance between the tent and the homestead, and is looking in, and watching the life that must go on in its steady round, whether the husband or brother is present or absent.

Then, as the day darkens, we can watch them go forth to battle—to that awful work which seems at once to touch the direct and divinest possibilities of life ; set themselves sternly, shoulder to shoulder, make their breasts a bulwark for their motherland ; to die if they must, or be maimed if they must, but to conquer whatever comes : and then if it is to die, to depart, as I have seen so many go, as when God kissed his servant on the mountain, and he slept. No complaint, and no

fear ; only the one great assurance that always comes with the well-done—the assurance that all is well here and yonder ; that a life is always good for a life ; no fear for the soul that has done its duty ; only the day-dawn of an infinite hope.

It has been my lot to kneel at the death-bed of many Christians. I never knelt by one on which the light from heaven shone quite so clear as it did on the poor cot of some soldiers who could not tell me much about their faith, but could tell me all I wanted to know about their duty. Dear, tender, beautiful souls, speaking of the wife and children with their last breath, and of their hope that the country for which they died would not forget them, and then leaving all the rest to God. No matter about the harp and crown ; if that was not best, they were not going to lament. So far they were sure of their footing, and they did not fear for the next step. To die for the great Mother was enough—that they felt was, in their poor measure, as when Christ died for their race. Heroes ! No better or brighter heroism was ever seen on this planet, than that which shone forth from these men, to whose dust we bring this beauty, wherever they lie.

I said, just now, that heroism was the lowest of the three grand qualities by which these risen souls, that look down on us to-day, are for ever to be distinguished. It may be for the reason that it is the quality on which the others must rest, and but for which they could have no real existence. The hero underlies the patriot and the saviour. Patriotism and sacrifice rest on the quaking sand, when heroism, the unconquerable quality, does not hold them up. "First win the battle, then look after me," Colonel Silas Miller cried. It was the instinct of the hero. Heroism, Carlyle has said, is that divine relation which, in all times, relates a great man to other men. It unites us to-day to every hero, in the land and in the sea, who fell for our country. But for their deeds we should have no country ; the heroes of the Nation, alive and dead, are at the foundation of the American nationality.

II. I said that above the hero stands the patriot. I speak still of the soldier when I say this, because it is the lesson of his life I am touching ; and he is greater as a patriot than a

hero, because he rose above all minor things, and gave himself, without reservation, to the republic.

I mean no offence when I say that there is a sectional patriotism, just as there is a sectarian Christianity. I say it the more freely, because I have to confess that I belong to a section in the republic and a sect in the church, and I cannot see my way out of my limitations. In ordinary times, I have said already, I believe this to be best. It is the disagreement of the atmospheres that cleanses the air. Our stormy lake there is infinitely better than the Dead Sea. The only perfect repose I know of is the awful stillness of the grave. We can never cease contending about principles and policies of government; and all honest contention, loyal still to the land, is like the systole and diastole of a true heart.

But when the crisis came that was to test the heroism of these men, it was to test their patriotism too. We were in a mighty contention among ourselves. We were not clear about our duty; to many a man who fought and fell for us, there came a time, in those days, when the reason for standing back, and substantially deserting the country, must have been as subtle and strong as the reasons for deserting Jehovah, in the old war in heaven, were to many a still unfallen angel. But in that moment, when our sole hope of salvation, under God, was in the compacted strength of every true man, then, as in Switzerland once, every canton poured out its people, and from every mountain came the mountaineer, to strike one stroke,—and the land was saved. So these men passed over the lines of difference, to stand shoulder to shoulder: forgetting the old battle-cries of the party, they gave themselves, without reserve, for the land; and it was this that made them greater than heroes. They could be heroes on the wrong side; they could only be patriots on the right side. Above all the reasons that could be given why they should hold back, and let “Mene, Tekel” be written, once for all, across our history, rose this one thing that could not be reasoned about,—the salvation of the land. It was to them as when you shall give a man reasons for not helping his mother; but then she shall say, “My son, I am your mother. I suckled you at my breast, and held you on my knees.” Then that is

enough ; there is no reason that can meet this instinct ; it lifts the man with a mighty spring to stand by her side.

This was the patriotism of these men. They forgot everything but the one great tender tie. "Let us agree to have a country," they said, "and then we can afford to differ about the best way to take care of it." They counted all things as loss save the excellency of the glory of an unbroken republic. And so it was natural that citizens of Chicago should think very tenderly, at such a time as this, of one who rests alone at the other extreme of our city. He was a soldier, though he struck no stroke except the stroke of his mighty words. He died just as the trumpet was sounding for the host, but he died fighting with a mighty ardor for the land he loved. I cast my poor blossom across the grave of Douglas, who, when the crisis came against which he had always striven by the best light he had, knew nothing under heaven but the undivided land.

Out of the graves of our heroes, everywhere, blooms this fair flower of patriotism. True men, who could rise above all minor things to the height of this great argument, that the republic, just as it was then, trembling, seemingly on the verge of dissolution, was good enough to live and die for, so lived and died for the republic ; and now they abide in the unfading splendor of hero and patriot together, as we abide a moment in their shining presence, to adorn their graves.

III. There is one step higher still these great souls have taken,—the loftiest men can ever attain to in this mortal life ; they are not only our heroes and patriots, as they stand there above us in their shining ranks, but the saviours of their country, and of all that was bound up in her undivided destiny !

When I try to weigh the whole matter which called these men, at last, to their great estate, I am forced to the conclusion that there was no way left to save this nation but by its most precious blood. God sent prophets and teachers, as great and good as he ever sent to any nation, and they poured out their hearts for us,—and it was all in vain. Everything was done which could be done, short of this shedding of blood, to avert the woe ; but we were helpless to avert it. Only the noblest

and best we had, leaping into the gulf in his best estate, could close the chasm, and secure the integrity of the land. Indeed, if this were the time and place, it would not be hard to tell how the trumpet that sounded the war did but announce the end of a truce; and this struggle was only a new outbreak of the long fight between despotic and democratic institutions, in which Gettysburg was made one with Marston-Moor. No such thing can be done to-day. It is enough to say the solemn crisis came in which the best we could have, could only be obtained at the cost of the best we had. Then these men came forward,—young men, with the bloom on their lives, strong men, and true,—the best we had, and offered themselves, if that would do, as the price of the national salvation. Budding hopes were in the heart of the youth, of a fair home by and by, and a good wife to keep it, and gracious presences fresh from God to people it, and a career burdened with the blessing that comes to every true man in this noble country. But he gave it all for the land, and said, "Live or die, that shall be my first care."

Strong ties bound others—home, wife, children, fortune, a career already open,—everything the heart could wish. To give up life at thirty was nothing beside giving up these things that life had brought. "My ten great reasons for taking no risk," one said, "were a wife and nine children."

I have no standard by which to measure what the men who left these things, and rest in these graves, have done. It seems like trying to measure the infinite: The infinite is in it. But there they stood in that great day,—the youth in the portals of his life, the man at his fireside,—and they looked right into the heart of all that was about them, and before them, and above them; and then they said, "I can give it all if my country needs it." Then they went out and gave it all for the need. They kept nothing back; like brave Captain Thompson, they said, "I leave all with God;" like Colonel Wright, when one arm was gone, they could "thank God that one hand might guide a horse;" like Major Chandler, they said, "Where I can be of most service I will stay;" like Silas Miller, they shouted, as their life leaped out, "First win the battle, then



look after me ;" like Mulligan, they cried, " I am dying, boys ; but don't lose the colors ;" and like Ransom, they said, " I have tried to do my duty, and have no fear for myself after death."

Do I mention these men, whose words still sound in our ears, it is only to realize for you the truth about all these noble deeds. Not one soldier, I care not how obscure, giving his life in this fashion, falls short of this great place—not one such man has died in vain. It is a whole sacrifice, and they are all saviours. They stand above us this day, as we stand by their graves, risen and glorified. I question the value of no other sacrifice ; but this, to me, is the greatest—the price that was paid for our nationality in the true gold of their true life. Nothing can rise above that, except that help of God, without which all were vain. Glorious for ever, with the hero and patriot, stands the saviour. All that a man has he will give for his life. Yet these gave their life, asking for nothing again, but that their land and nation might not be torn asunder.

I have been led to make this threefold distinction in the glory of our dead, because I have felt it would not only give us a clearer conception of the true nature of what they have done, but might come home the more weightily to those of us who stand here to-day. Heroism, patriotism, and the great office of the saviour, are the threefold cord that must still bind every true American to his duty, and open the way to his greatest place. We must be heroes still, and patriots, and saviours, or we must stand in the shadow, while these men stand in the light, and be content to be despised when they are worshipped. God gives no man a supreme place who will not do a supreme work. War and peace are but the two ways that he has marked out for the one thing. Heroism as high, patriotism as precious, and a saviourship as sacred as that which these men rose to, are still open to you and me. Pre-emption from any of these glorious qualities is pre-emption from the best that God has to give. To be hero, patriot, and saviour is the mark of the prize of our *high calling*. To fight against corruption, as these fought

against conspiracy ; to stand for the whole land, in peace, as they did in war ; and in war, if it come again, to make the uttermost sacrifice which can be demanded for the commonwealth of America,—these are just as truly the demand made on you and me as was the demand on the men whose dust moulders beneath these mounds. The body and blood of this sacrament of flowers for the heroes and patriots and saviours of our land, are lost to our life, if they fail to make us heroes, patriots, and saviours also.

I must not weary you. I have but a few more words that insist on being said. Brave men, I have said ; good soldiers,—and you gather from this the idea that I have meant men, and not women,—but I could never hope to pardon myself, let alone be pardoned of God and my country, if I failed to speak at such a time of the woman, too, and of the woman, in every respect, as the exemplar of the great qualities I have pointed out in the man. The woman stood as truly as the man by this great cause ; made her sacrifice as quietly and as perfectly as he did, and on the battle-field, or in the hospital, or the house, was the hero, the patriot, and the saviour, too.

When the youth would look into the eyes of the maiden for confirmation of his longing to let his love of the land take precedence of his love for her, she said Amen, gave him the kiss of consecration, and sent him forth, her true knight. When the husband said, with a shaking voice, to the wife, "I feel almost as if I ought to go and leave you and the children," the voice of the wife grew steady as she said, "Go, then,;" turning almost into altogether, in the sacrifice ; and she looked on with steady eyes, at least until he was gone, because all the courage there was, or could be, must be taken with him to the camp. Then, as the work went on, and grew ever more dreadful, and new drafts were made on her life for help to the sick and wounded, and for everything that a woman can do to cube the might of man, with unflinching steadiness she toiled and suffered ; supplying, with a measureless generosity, everything that was needed to the call ; sanctifying this very day, this Sunday of ours, O, so

many times, by doing all manner of work, and doing everything, not merely without a murmur,—for that we might have expected of her patience and her love,—but doing it with a mighty cheerfulness, that sent cheer into every hero's soul, and was the expression, through all the darkness, of the light she foresaw and foretold,—singing of the coming of victory and peace, when the full price was paid, and the powers of darkness were driven away by the power of the living God.

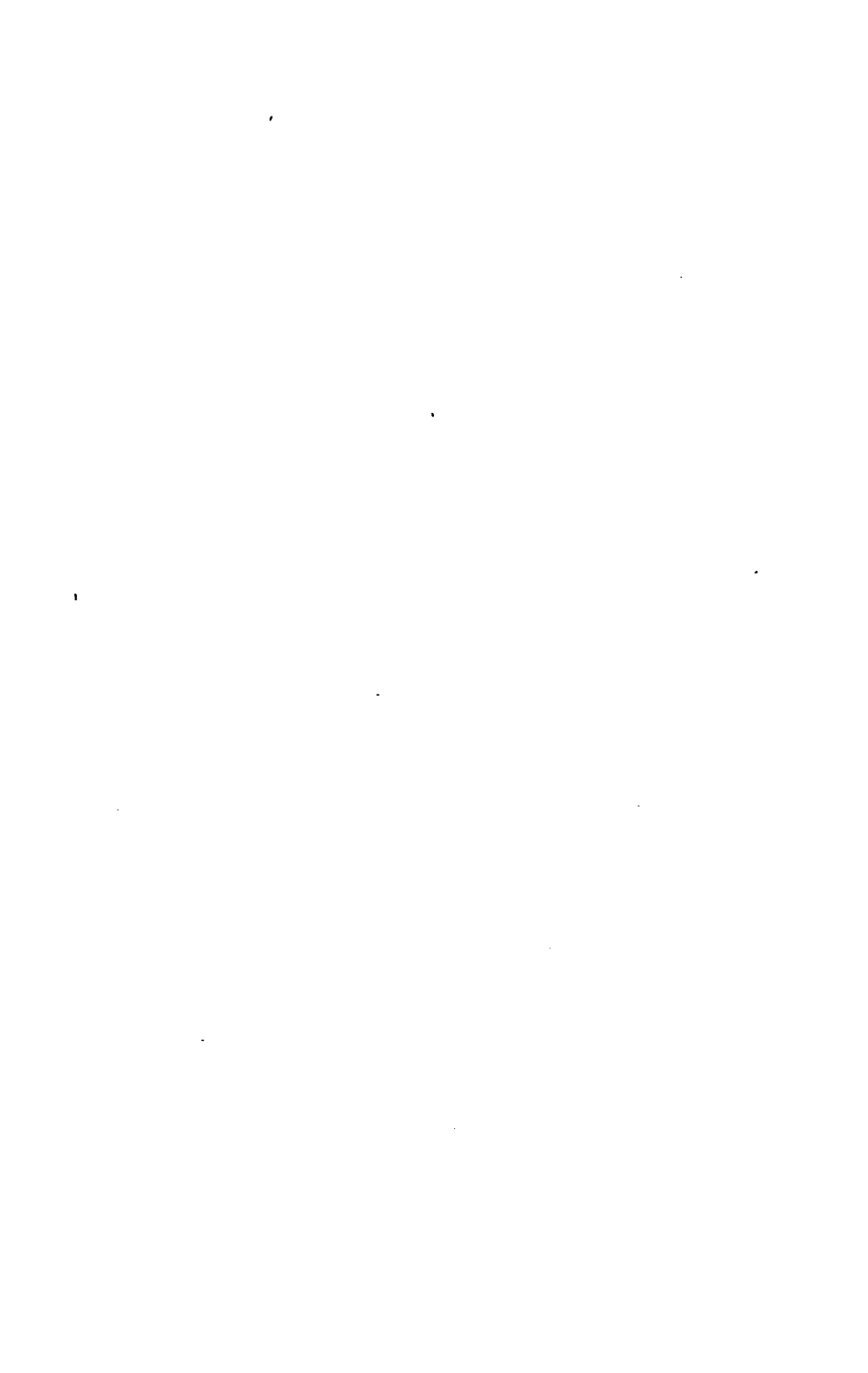
Under thousands of mounds, in the circle of our land this day, rest these true women, heroes, patriots, and saviours, with the men. Broken down at their tasks, when the poor frame could hold the great soul no longer, they died, as they had lived, for the motherland; not having received the promise, but seeing it afar off, and with their last breath praying for the establishment of the right. Over all these graves we cast our blossoms, as we cast them on the graves of our noble men. These flowers, and that which these flowers symbolize everywhere, we cast on the graves in which all women are resting, whose souls are risen to that great place, and stand with the angels of God.

Neither can I forget, as I stand here, that company of unknown martyrs who never found their way where they could fight for the right, yet could not countenance the wrong, and so were slain, and buried beneath the ruins of their own homesteads, and lie there to-day under the Southern sun. Poor, dumb, nameless martyrs—men and women who could only suffer, but had no chance to do, or could only do in nooks and corners, carrying their lives in their hands; and then, at last, giving them for the land that was never to know their name. Not one such grave of man or woman, white or black, can be left out of this consecration. They did what they could; we give for it what we have. They need nothing we can do; we need to feed our hearts on their great lesson of how good it is to be steadfast and true, all to yourself, if the host is on the other side, and to die one lone man or woman for the right, where the wrong seems supreme. My heart goes out, as I stand here this day, to those nameless graves of the

nameless martyrs. I bid you remember them as you offer your gift. They, too, are our kinsmen and friends : they died that we might live.

Finally, I bid you look with a tender pity on the graves of those who died fighting against us, if they knew no better. They know better now, and if they could come back into life, would be with us and of us. It was the fate of many, more than their fault, to be drawn into that dreadful vortex, to fight against the holiest things, and think they were doing God service. It is their doom to have fallen fighting for the wrong. Let us cast the mantle of forgiveness over their graves, and let some poor blossom overflow that way as a token of what we feel. We alone can afford to forgive and forget. We cannot afford to wait until those forgive and forget who are at our mercy. O, strong, and true, and tender is the North ! and this is the time for tenderness.

And then, as these great thanksgivings well up in our souls, and we say, God bless the land that has been saved by this sacrifice ! let us do what these great ones are beseeching us to do from their high place—thank God for making them what they are. Then, as the starshine pales before the sunshine, the light of the glory of God will flood these cemeteries, set shining ones beside all the graves, and send us home with a sense that we have seen only the grave-clothes. All our dead are risen ! Death is swallowed up in Victory !



NATURE AND LIFE :

SERMONS

BY

ROBERT COLLYER.

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## P R E F A C E.

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I LET this little book go out into the world, feeling almost as if it were one of my children. I cannot be indifferent to its reception, because I love it. So I trust it will be welcome wherever it goes,—that friends will be glad to see it for my sake, and strangers for its own. If it should be blessed with a long life, I shall rejoice greatly; but, if it die early, I shall still be glad it was born.

R. C.

CHICAGO.



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# SERMONS.

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## I.

### Root and Flower.

JOHN xii. 20-25: "And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again, Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

I WENT once, in the last days of June, to see an old friend in the country, who has consecrated his life to trees and flowers. When I came away, he gave me something wrapped in a piece of paper, bidding me select the best spot in my garden, when I got home, and plant it. "For," he added, "that is a very choice flower, sir,—one of the most beautiful things you ever saw in your life." I left my friend, and started home; and, when I had got well out of his sight, of course I undid the paper, that I might look at my treasure. It was as queer, unpromising a thing to look at, as I ever saw. At the first glance, you would take it for a poor, haggard old onion. There was not a speck of beauty about it, that I should desire it. Then I put my flower back into the paper, brought it home and planted it just as I was directed; and when I had done this, I began to ponder and wonder over this great mystery of planting and growing and flowering. I said to myself,—“What are my conceptions of what is to come out of my dark, forbidding bulb? I never saw the flower, I suppose in my life. I have no certain idea what it is like. It may resemble a sunflower or a poony or a daisy or a bluebell. If I carry a single tooth pried out of the limestone to Professor Ower, he will sketch me an outline of the animal that used it, though this be the first fragment ever seen of a thing that died out ten thousand years before the first man. But I may carry a fragment of this root

to the Owen of plants, if there be one, and ask him to search in it for the flower ; and I suppose he must fail to tell me what it will be, because there seems to be no possible link between the bare grain and the body as it pleases God. And then this choicest spot in the garden,—what did my friend mean by that ? If I understand him, he meant a place of the strongest possible contrasts,—a place bare to the sun and the night and the wind and the rain ; where I had gathered the heaviest proportion of shard, refuse, and decay. : a place where life has to do battle with darkness and death, and to draw from them its richest elements of beauty and perfume. And then what have I done ? My friend gave me this flower as he called it, folded carefully as if it were a jewel of price ; and carefully as he gave it, I brought it home. But when I got home, I put it down into this grim earth, this fragment of the measureless waste of land, and left it there. Had I not better keep it in some safe casket, or fold it to my heart, until I see the beauty my friend has promised ? Is it possible,—is it indispensable in that will of God which I have been taught to call the order of nature, that the only way to come at the beauty and glory is that it shall be put away and buried out of my sight ? Can it be true, that the way to find what I want is to lose it ; that the transcendent form and color and perfume of August must depend upon the decay of June ?”

Well, friends, these are some of the hinted questionings that whispered themselves out of my poor dry root, and I could give them but one answer ; namely, “These seeming contradictions are only so because I do not know enough. And I can only know as I walk by faith ; for faith, above all things, makes the discords of the present the harmonies of the future.”

It is one of the many curious things that look out at us from almost every page of the Gospels, to assure us that the Gospels themselves are substantially fragments out of the real life and times of Jesus Christ,—that these men who had come to the feast at Jerusalem and requested to see Jesus, should be Greeks, at that time probably the most inquisitive and newsy race on the earth. They had come, I presume, from Corinth or Ephesus ; and, when they went back home, the first question

would be, "What's the news?" Now, the news was Jesus; his name and fame had gone out into all Jewry. He was just then the common subject of discussion in the city gates and synagogues; and it would be a great thing for them, when they got home, to say, "We have seen Jesus, and talked with him." And the answer of Christ to their request, though it seems at the first glance to be no answer at all, touches the very heart of all such question and answer, and is, beside that, a beautiful instance of the rich, transcendental nature of this Son of God: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." As if he would say, "These men want to see me. What can they gain by that? There is nothing to see in me. If they want to see me, they must wait until I go away, and the world sees me no more. What they will see is not me. The root is not the flower. This common, foot-sore man, with this poor, brown face, so thin and worn that men think I may be nearly fifty, while I am but thirty,—what can I be to men whose ideal is Apollo? I cannot sing with Homer; I cannot speculate with Plato; I cannot unloose the seals with Euclid, or bear men on the mighty tides of eloquence with Demosthenes. Phidias made the marble speak; Apelles made the canvas glow; I made ploughs and carts and ox-yokes and stools. They cannot see me. My simple words about God and man, and duty and destiny, would be foolishness to them. Let them wait until the world burns with the lustre of what is sprung out of me. When I have risen and stand with the martyr in the fire; when I shine in the catacombs until there is no need of the sun; when I have whispered my comfort and confidence to millions of desolate souls, who are now, and will be looking at what seems to them the fearful vacancy of the hereafter; when I have created new homes for purity and peace to dwell in, and brought men and women and children back to the Divine will; when the love and truth and self-sacrifice of which God has made me, though I seem but a poor peasant, shall have done what all the genius of all the ages has failed to do; when I have hushed the fevered heart of the world to rest, and quickened it into a new life,—then they can see me. But I must die to live.

The burial comes, then the resurrection. I must be absent as a root, or I can never be present as a flower.

Such, as I understand it, is the meaning folded, not only in my text, but also in the richest life of the world. Just as this most celestial soul was folded in a life about which there is a very early application of those old prophecies of some chosen one who should be as a root out of a dry ground, whose face should be marred more than that of any man, who should have no form nor comeliness in him, so that, when men saw him, there should be no beauty that they should desire him; and as God cast him, so folded, into the place which of all others at that time, held the heaviest proportion of shard and refuse hastening to decay,—cast him into that place as the choicest spot in the garden of the world, and then, by sunlight and darkness and dryness and rain and life and death, wrought out his purpose, until the flower came up, in the full time, to fill the world with wonder and blessing,—so it will be with God's best blossom and fruit for ever and ever.

The world bends with infinite tenderness over the story of that woman who had no beauty and no blessing, out on the Yorkshire moors. We pity her for the dismal, scranny school of her childhood, where food for the outer and the inner life was alike hard and crusty and mouldy. We pity her for the lonely drudgery, so hapless and so hopeless, out in Brussels, as we see her sit down to it, while her wings bleed beating the bars of her cage, and the music soars within her,—

“And the life still drags her downward  
To its level, day by day,  
What is fine within her growing  
Coarse to sympathetic clay.”

Our lips tremble as we see that striving after some touch of grace and beauty to deck the hard, grey home, though it embody itself in no better thing than a bright little frock and a pair of tiny red shoes; yet to see the poor blossom of grace and beauty shrivelling in the fire, put there and held there by a father harder than the home. We watch her, a woman while yet a child,—a woman, because other little children, still more helpless, and motherless, and can find no other nature large

enough to take them in and understand and adopt them ; a sister in all sweet, ingenuous, simple ways ; a mother in all wise, overbending care and love ; and then, at last, a woman grown, walking over great stretches of wild country, that she might be alone with that other Father and Mother, the Father and Mother of us all, and gather strength and courage from the communion, to go back and bear her burden of a stern, half-mad father, and a reckless, lost brother, and a bare, rugged life ; then we say, " Oh ! why was not such a soul clothed in the beauty of Juno, and born in the vale of Tempe, in the golden days, the first-born and nursling of a queen ? " But we say this no longer when the flower unfolds to the sun,—when her books and her life, in all their variant strength and fulness, reveal the mystery of the homely enfolding, the rank, sharp contrasts of the garden-plat and the hot days and dark nights ; for we see in the flower brimming with refreshment and blessing to thousands, how not to the beauty of the goddess, not to the flowery meadows and bosky dells of Arcadia, not to the firstborn and nursling of a queen, could this power come ; but to such a soul, set in such a place, to battle through and gather all the influences of such a life.

And so, again, dear, quaint, loving Charles Lamb flowered out of the sharp contrasts of Fleet Street and the South-sea House, and that other influence and element of bitterness almost too terrible to mention. No man who has been touched by the sweet beauty and merry twingling humor of Elia and the Letters, can realize readily how it is that this airy, sprightly, and most wise, genial soul, could ever gather such nurture in the shadows of Christ's Hospital, and the eternal dust and din of London. One imagines that the drudgery of the desk, and the shadow of a home where no face of wife or child ever lighted at the sound of his footstep, ought to have withered him up ; and so it ought, but for one thing that flashes down into the mystery, and, besides the fact of his endowment, solves the problem. When Charles Lamb was a young man, standing at the portals of life, with that rich nature beating in his heart, his sister Mary, in a sudden passion of insanity, did the most awful

deed that daughter can do to mother. Then, when the dust was given to dust, this young man said, "If I remain as I am, and make my sister a home, there may be months or years at a time when she can live with me in freedom and comfort ; but, if I put her away, there can be no future for her but the asylum all the days of her life." Then the young man buried his rich nature in the soil of that home. And, in all his life, he never told the world what he had done ; revealing himself so frankly in all beside, there is no hint of that prime revelation which might open all the rest. He buried his life. And, were we ignorant of this great law of what is rich soil to a noble root, we would say, Now he will wither away and die. But, lo ! God brings out of that burial a flower, whose perfume and beauty charm the world. Had he saved his life, it may be he had lost it ; but, because he gave it, he saved it ; because he went into the darkness, he sprang into the light ; he rose because he was buried, and his uttermost loss became his most transcendent gain.

There is nothing more touching to me in all literature, than those poems and letters of Burns that reveal to us this great fact of adverse influences perfecting the Divine purpose. We hear eminent critics deplore the fact that Burns wasted his powers. They say he ought to have written an epic. Friends, Burns did write an epic ; and the subject was the battle of a soul with its physical, social, and spiritual adversaries,—an epic perhaps the most significant that ever was written. And his whole life, and every line in his poems, blend together to make it ; and it trembles all over with this truth of a life found in the losing, and lost in the finding. Born in the worst period and place of a fossilized Calvinism, he drew from that very fossil the richest nurture for a broad and catholic trust in the Infinite Love. Placed where a free expression of opinion in religious speculation was counted atheism, and in politics treason, the very bonds that were laid on his soul to keep him down, quickened him into some of the deepest and grandest utterances for freedom that ever rang through the world. Taught from his cradle that our human nature is utterly abhorrent and bad, the *angels trust* not each other with a more perfect trust than that

which filled his soul toward humanity. Loving as few men ever loved, fewer ever told, as he did, what love can do to lift a man near to heaven, or to sink him into a great deep. No man ever painted such an interior as the "Cotter's Saturday Night," or by implication called such solemn penalties upon his own soul for causing the mother to weep, and the father to hang his head in such a place. And out of that bitter time and place, with that passionate, sinful, sorrowful nature, the result of the life, in the whole breadth of it, remains one of the richest flowers that ever blossomed on the world. A Scottish peasant deplorably poor, he left the world richer beyond all price. Born into the lap of a grim and forbidding time, the time was glorified in his birth. More selfish than most sinners, he was more unselfish than almost any saint. And well he might have cried out, "Let no man look at me who wants to see me, or try to find the result of my life by the measure of what he sees. I shall die, broken down by poverty and sin; but I shall rise again, and lead captivity captive, and receive gifts for men. Old sectarian antagonisms will forget to be hard and unmerciful, as they hear me pleading; and the fires of a nobler political faith glow for ever in the words I have uttered of the rights of man. Men shall look more frankly into each other's faces, when they hear me cry, 'A man's a man for a' that;' and the atheist gulp down his sneer, as he ponders over my rebuke. My better nature shall make good men better; my wild cries for pardon teach the sinner afresh the curse of sin. My life was lost, that it may be found; I died that I might bear much fruit."

Now, I have mentioned these representative lives, bearing on different sides of the thought before us, in order that you may see, by these examples, how I want to urge upon you the fact, that this clear and steady insight into the correspondence between nature in the plant and nature in the man, which comes out so constantly in the teachings of Christ, is weighted with a deep meaning, and is for ever open to suggest rich lessons for the soul.

And this first of all,—that this present, personal-bounded life is but faintly understood, it is so poor in comparison with what shall come out of it, if we are steady to its great central purpose.



My shrivelled bulb, darkling there under the soil; this homely, near-sighted woman, sneering at the "Methodies;" this poor, stuttering London clerk, watching his sometimes insane sister; this Ayrshire peasant, whose highest preferment was to be a gauger, and whose heart exulted because he had "dinnered wi' a lord,"—a lord whose only hope of being remembered now on this earth lies in that single dinner; this peasant man of Galilee, whose brothers did not believe in him,—all these instances strike the truth home, that we see but a poor hint now of the glory resting on our life, to be discovered when that life shall be made perfect.

That man walking over the hills of Jewry in the old time was no more like our worshipful Christ and Son of God, if you had seen him, than the May root is like the August flower. That quiet woman, before she wrote "Jane Eyre," was no more to the world than the woman hidden to-day in our prairies or backwoods, who shall yet reveal herself and be central to the world. Charles Lamb and Robert Burns, could they come back, would find nations to do them homage, on the very spot where they felt most deeply the bitterness of neglect. And this, not so much because the world was blind to their beauty, as that this beauty had not yet flowered out. They died, "not having received the promise, but seeing it afar off; God having reserved some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Then there is this lesson, that those very elements of decay and death we fear will hinder, to the true soul will not hinder, but help; nay, be vital and essential to the great purpose for which that soul came, and to which it tends.

I know of nothing more fatal, in all outward seeming, than Jewry to Christ, and Ayrshire to Burns, and Fleet Street to Lamb, and Haworth to Charlotte Brontë. If God in every one of these instances, had revealed to me the conditional as the root of the resulting life, I think I should have besought him every time to alter the decision, and not plant such holy and noble natures in such a dismal soil; while the place I should have chosen, had it been left to me, would probably be as if I had kept the root my friend gave me safely locked in my desk,—

never thinking how it is out of the very contest with these antagonisms, that the choicest power and grace must spring : as the farce of saying mass by the scented priests in Rome made Luther say it with a deeper reverence, and more anxious searching for its grace. But, above all, may we not see this greatest lesson, that more profit comes to the soul, and all related to it, out of separation and darkness and death, in God's good time, than can ever come out of union and light and life? "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it will bring forth much fruit."

I suppose no men that ever lived would be more ready than these apostles to say, "We grant this, if you mean a grain of wheat; but we cannot see it, if you mean the life of a man. Yet they themselves were to furnish one of the most striking applications of the fact ever found in human history. While the Messiah was with them, they blundered over his sayings, hesitated whether they could go with him, held a divided love, and saw through a glass darkly, as I saw the August flower in the root of June. But when he died and was gone, then he came back to them in all his glory and power. When they had lost him, and darkness and death had taken him seemingly into their heart, then came the resurrection. Every word he had said became radiant with tenderness and truth and love. His deeds caught a new meaning. His life filled before them into an ever-growing wonder; and he was transfigured for ever, not to three men, but to the universe. Then, as the great memories filled them, their sense grew ever clearer of what their Friend had been; but even that, at last, was lost in the sense of what he was. So they loved him, and labored and lived and died for him; and, when their time came, went singing, with a most glorious and transcendent exultation, into the shadow of death, because his light, shining through the shadow, goldened all the way.

Now, this is where the truth under discussion comes most urgently home to every one of us. The time comes again and again, when we must bury the best we have, and leave it in the soil,—sever some precious belonging of life for duty with Lamb; or find sin or circumstance, sever it with Burns. The *prima*

condition of a life ever found, is a life ever lost. But there are times when we all feel poor and bare and sad for our losses, and wonder whether it was not all wrong when the treasure was taken away. I tell you, if we are poor because we stand true to life and duty, we are poor only as the sower is poor, because he has to cast his wheat into the furrow, and then wait for the sheaves of harvest,—poor as I was poor, because my flower-root was not treasured where it would remain as it was, but was cast where a life was waiting to receive and re-create it, as true in its way and might as the life of the first archangel.

Our poverty, then, is our wealth, and our loss our gain. If our life is as God will, yet is bare, it is only as the granary is bare in June. That very bareness is the prophecy of plenty; and fulness alone in June might bring grave reason to fear, that there might be sparseness and hunger in January. When I sow my good treasure broadcast, as Christ did; when I give myself with what I am giving,—then, as the earth never fails of her harvest, but, in the Old World or the New, will surely bring us our daily bread, so the soul can never fail of her divine returns. Here or yonder, in the full time, comes the full blessing; the flower flashing out glory, the fields laughing with plenty.

“Then who can murmur and misdoubt,  
When God’s great bounty finds him out?”

And just as I can gather and deepen this faith; as I can realize, though I have never seen, the beauty of my August,—I shall be ready to plant my root, to let my wheat fall into the ground and die, to give my life. Our great temptation is to hold on to the seed-corn. We are in agony because of the sowing. When the angel comes and takes our treasure, we say we will go too, that we may die also. But the hand so masterful and yet so gentle takes our treasure, and casts it into its grave; and then the hope and love and life of our life is dead.

Dead, did I say? What means this story of the summer? Is not every day proclaiming through all the land, that what was seeming death is unconquerable life? Death has no dominion; death is lost in victory. The resurrection comes while I am going to look at the grave, and weep there, and count my losses and recount my poverty. And then the shining ones tell

me the great secret, and send me on my way, lost in wonder and solemn joy.

So it has been with our nation. Our root was buried in the rank soil of decay and death ; and many cried out that the noble thing perfected out of a former summer, and watered by the tears and enriched with the blood of the fathers, was clean lost. It was because God had taken it out of its dead coverings, and cast it into the heart of elements that throb with life, as the earth throbs with the summer sun. It was buried that it might rise. The flowering of the former summer was over and done ; the blossoms of our national holiness had withered away ; the root alone was left. We held on to that through the winter, thank God ; but then we wanted to hold on to it through the summer also ; we feared to trust it to the new spring. The root, withered as it was, was what we wanted. But our Father is the husbandman ; and he buried the root out of our sight. It was because there was as sure a hope for the nation as there is for June roses. We had to watch painfully for it,—to wrestle with awful oppositions through a dark night. But so does the farmer watch and wrestle for his harvest. Canker-worm and caterpillar take their toll ; wind and storm do their work. Anxiety and care can never be quite absent. They are hardly more absent to-day than ever they were ; only the day is sure to come in the nation as in our life, in our life as in the nation, when the flower unfolds to the sun in its perfect glory.

When the battle of Shiloh was fought, I went from Chicago to the battle-field, with a corps of nurses, to take care of the wounded men. Our city, when I left it, was sheeted in grim black weather : not a leaf was open on the trees, not a flower in the gardens. But, when we got into the South, the orchards were rejoicing in great rosy clouds of apple-blossom, and the woods were full of song. When I came back to Chicago, however, the trees were still bare. Here and there, a leaf had ventured out, and was shivering in the bitter wind : but there was no spring yet ; and men were reaping up all their old grudges against the Lakes and their weather, and were sure the spring would never come.

Now, I have one tree just by my study window, with which

I have managed to become very intimate. We nod to each other every morning. In those long black days, I could see my friend was looking disheartened enough. It had great treasure of buds; but it seemed to fold them as a child folds a treasure in its clasped fingers, and all the while to be saying, "Well, I do think this spring will never come." But I said, "Hold on, good tree: spring is coming. I saw her down there on the Alabama line. Here, where you are, is the winter,—fierce, persistent, determined to stay. Yonder, where I have been, is the spring,—soft, sunny, filling the woods with her white splendour; and I can see the blossoms pouring up this way, faster than I could run on my feet to tell you." And it was so. The warm days came at last; the summer was victor; and my tree stood, tremulous in her beautiful green robes, like a bride adorned for her wedding.

Now, why will men not take these things into their hearts, and be as full of faith in the meaning and purpose of their lives as of their flowers? Is the man alone the neglected step-child? are his fortunes alone misfortunes? are we much worse than the lilies? Or is it not of all things true, that as man rises nearest of all on this earth to the image of the Infinite, so he is nearest of all on this earth to the Providence that enfolds and blesses all?

## II.

### What a Leaf said.

ISAIAH lxiv. 6: "We all do fade as a leaf."

MY text is a sermon in itself. It was whispered from the trees, as you came to church: it will rustle under your feet, as you go home. It is the sermon of these autumn days, proclaiming the dissolution, as the spring proclaimed the resurrection and the life. I heard this sermon, when I was seventeen, in the plane-trees that covered the foss of an old Roman camp: I shall hear it, if I live, when I am seventy, in the elms and maples by this lake shore; and it has always been the one thing, that the fading and falling leaf is the mute monitor of the fading and failing life.

And I can well believe how my experience must answer to yours,—how, in pensive moments all your life long, when the crimson banners unfold on the trees, and the leaves begin to fall about your path, you have thought more painfully of the fading life than at any other time in the year. This seems to be not only the common feeling, but the habit also of the prophet and seer. Few psalms were ever sung about the fading leaf, that had for their burden a great cry of accomplishment and victory. All rejoice over the purple grape and ripened grain. The fruit, ruddy and golden, seems to laugh at us on the tree; but the leaf, rustling under our feet or shivering in the sharp frost, seems to tell only of dissolution and death. We thank God in our great Thanksgiving for the kindly *fruits* of the earth: we never thank him for the kindly leaves. Every thing on the farm and in the garden is considered, except the leaf. “How strange and awful the gusty wind and whirling leaves of the autumnal day!” Coleridge cries; and he does but express what all men feel. We tack it into a distich for our children’s copybooks; we set it to music, and sing it in our parlors, and churches; and we engrave it on the memorial stones of our dead,—that we all do fade as a leaf.

And yet I do not intend to re-echo this cry to you this morning. At the best, it is not the cry of the gospel, but of the law. It is not of salvation by grace, but of dissolution by nature, that we are thinking, when the leaves flutter down from the trees, and the hollow winds sigh through the woodlands. He is no gospel minister who will wilfully discourse of discouragement. I know of no voice that ought to be held so sacredly for inspiration as the voice of the preacher except, indeed, that of the husband or wife. We do not come to church to be told that we are withered leaves and crawling worms, but to be assured that we are men made only a *little* lower than the angels, and heirs of the everlasting life. We come to the preacher to hear what will help us sing,—to realize what there is beside and better than fading and falling. There is not a man of us that does not encounter quite enough on week-days to dishearten and

discourage him, in being compelled to listen to "Thus saith the world," without being discouraged on a Sunday by "Thus saith the Lord."

So, while I will frankly say my text is true, and the sermon it preaches is true, and the whisper we hear in the autumn wind is true, this question still waits to be answered, "*How is it true?*" Is the fading of the leaf the only true thing about it, the only matter worth our painful, earnest thought; or is there something more and better? What can the leaf crimsoning on the tree, and the wind wailing through the branches, whisper to our hearts beside this one sad strain, "We all do fade as a leaf?"

Well, this, I think, first of all. It can say, "Take care you do not go wrong, in the first step, by misunderstanding entirely what it is for a leaf to fade; that you do not exalt that into the greatest, which may be of the smallest possible consequence; and that your steady gaze at this point in its being does not shut out at once reflection and anticipation,—what the leaf has been, and what it may be, in the providence of God."

I do not say this to apologize for the leaf. I have no idea that prospect and retrospect shall clasp hands over it, and hide it from our sight. I want the leaf to testify for itself, and say, "Yes, indeed, your text is true. I am a fading leaf certainly,—and all leaves fade. But then you must remember, that this is the true time to fade, as the May-days were to spring; and, I cannot doubt this, that any true time must be a good time. Beside, I want you to tell me, whether I am not, in my degree, a ripe and perfect fruit, as certainly as your grape or apple; and so whether my falling is not like the fall of all ripe fruit, the proof that I have done God's will through storm and shine, and hear him whispering, 'Well done' is the first frost; so that when I am turning to fall, am I not also turning to rise; to be again, in my degree, a servant and minister of the grace of God?"

"The truth is," my leaf may continue, "you look at the leaf as you look at life, along the surface, instead of into the

deep : your estimate is by superface, not cube measure. I seem to fall : I do fall. But, if it were possible for you to see what I am doing beside, you would wonder, as you noted, how the spirit that has animated me, and been the life of my life, through all the days and nights since I came into being, is quietly freeing itself from its old familiar frame ; and rising, not in fable but in fact, in deed and in truth, to wait the bidding of the Master ; while the frame itself, this thing shivering over your head or rustling under your feet, will be guarded and kept until the morning of its resurrection. Did you rejoice this summer over your strawberries and roses, and not remember, how, for a thousand ages, my race, faded leaves as you call us, have lain treasured, waiting to be their ministers and yours whenever you should come to need us ? You preach from your text, ' We all do fade as a leaf : ' why do you not sometimes preach from that other text, ' The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations ? ' What nation is not healed through our ministry ? What great thing was ever done where we cast no shadow ? You cry ' nothing but leaves, ' and think you have touched the dusty heart of all barrenness. When you know what it is to be even a faded and fallen leaf, there will be a better music in your cry. It is true, we are nothing but leaves ; yet, in the order of the creation, you had been nothing but for us. Here, as everywhere, there is no broken link in the chain that binds all things God has made, fast to his throne, no step lost out of the ladder stretching from earth to heaven, no dry place in the river of life. From the atom to the angel, in Him we live and move, and have our being ; and he is not far from every one of us."

Then, when we come to understand this, we are aware how this leaf falls honorably, after doing what one leaf may do for its own and the common blessing. A mere leaf, one in countless myriads, it did not come out of chance, and does not go into chance. It cannot fall to the ground, as it could not bloom on the tree, without the will of our Father ; and so, for leaves at least, whatever we may believe of lives, this fading and falling is not defeat and death, but victory and life.

For, again, if my leaf may testify, it will say, " I am a



fading leaf certainly; watching for the sun and frost to give the signal for my dissolution. I have had to bear heavy rains, to wrestle with great storms, to shudder in electric fires, to fight my way and hold my own as well as I could in the teeth of foes and parasites, ever since I began to spring. But this I can say, as I fall, that there has been no day since I first began to grow, when I have not tried to be true to the law of my life, as the mediator, bridging the gulf between senseless matter and the sentient soul. You rejoice in your fruit; if there had been no leaf, there could have been no fruit, and there would be no tree. The servant of all, I am, in my way, the greatest of all, by the infallible ordination and law of all service. I give you walnut for your gunstock, and ash for the handle of your plough. I work through all weathers to build your ships, factories, homes, and churches. I am indispensable to the match for your fire, and the mast for your merchantman. I brace myself, and stand shoulder to shoulder with my fellows on great pines, keeping watch and ward in the long winter, on every coigne of vantage, to keep you from the driving northern storms, and spread myself as a shield over valley and champaign, to shelter you from the burning summer heats. I cast my mantle over the raindrop, until it can find a runlet; and the runlet I shelter to the rivulet, the rivulet to the river, and the river to the sea. I cover the springs among the moss, and weave my tapestry to adorn the bare desolation of the mountains. I hold myself, simple and separate, always to my one purpose. And now, in my falling, I shall fall for blessing, and cease to be a leaf because, as a leaf, I am no longer needed. But, in ceasing to be what I am, I may well remind you of what one has said who loves us, and takes us into his heart beyond all men living: 'We compare ourselves to leaves: the leaves may well scorn the comparison, if we live only *for* ourselves. If ever in the autumn a pensiveness steals over us, as the leaves flutter by in their fading, may we not wisely look up to their mighty monuments; and as we see how fair they are, how far prolonged in arch and aisle the avenues of the valleys, the fringes of the hills, so stately, so eternal; the joy of man, the comfort of all living creatures, the glory of the earth—

remember that these are but the monuments of fading leaves, that faintly flit past us and die? Let them not die before we read and understand their holy revelation; so that we also, careless of a monument for the grave, may build one in the world, by which men may be taught to remember, not where we died, but where we lived.’”

Then, keeping still to my parable, I can see how my leaf will say further: “You can think as you like, therefore, about man, as he fades and falls,—make the end of your life here as mournful as you please,—dishonor death by evil names and images, as its shadow falls upon your race; but I ask you, once for all, to leave me out of your sad analogies. I protest against being counted as one that shudders at dissolution. I might have done that in June, when my life was all to live; but in September, when it has had its day, as I begin to loosen from the spray where God caused me to spring, the loosening seems as good as ever did the springing.

“Then, there is another thing. I cannot tell much about it; it is just a sweet, misty mystery, to be made clear, no doubt, in due time. But near my heart, through all my summer, faint at first, but growing stronger with the growing days, I have felt and nursed and shielded the intimation of another springing in a spring-time to come, to which my present dissolution seems to be entirely indispensable. So, then, I shall die as I have lived, with my face to the sun and the great loving heavens, and welcome the autumn frost as I welcomed the spring sunshine. It is true that I have no hope like that your race holds of living again,—

‘Wrapped from the fickle and the frail,  
With gathered powers yet the same,  
Piercing the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from vail to vail.’

My spirit must go whence it came, and my frame must be trodden into the dust; yet I fear nothing that can happen to either, because I know that both will be held in the hollow of His hand who counts a faded leaf. I am sure of all the life I shall ever need. I know that *my* Redeemer liveth. God will not leave *me* in the grave. Though I am only a leaf, ‘All the days of my appointed time will I wait till *my* change come, and

trust the wisdom that has done so well for me this time, what that change shall be.' And so, if men are crying, 'We all do fade as a leaf,' in any spirit of down-looking sadness and fear, let them speak for their race, not for ours; because, being true to life, we find out how to be true to death and secure an entrance into the life to come."

Now, need I say, that, in lingering so over the leaf, I am seeking the lesson for the life, how sure is the assurance, that, if we will be so faithful even as a leaf on a tree, when we fade and fall there can be no room for regret; because aspect, prospect, and retrospect will be all alike good, as we look down into the deeps of life, and up through its altitudes, instead of watching, as we do, merely along its surfaces. In this spirit, I want to trace, then, the lesson of my parable, pointed alike at the cry in the text and the echo in our hearts. And, in doing this, to keep as close as I can to the lines I have drawn, and, running them along their natural parallels of the leaf and the life, say agreed that we all do fade as a leaf: what then?

For there is no alternative but to face the fact. We all do fade and fall. We know that dear faces and presences do fade out from every life. I walked one summer under the green leaves, on Staten Island, with as dear a friend as ever man had on the earth; and we said, "We will meet here, and walk and talk so, every summer;" but, when we met again, something had changed. When the summer came again, my friend was fighting for his life; and, before another summer, I went down from the West into the quiet New-England valley where he was brought up, to say a prayer by his grave. Indeed, indeed, it is true we all do fade as a leaf. Yet I say, what then? Am I sure that I fully realize what it is to fade as a leaf? Do I touch, in my estimate, the cube or the superface? Is it not true that, in my painful and steady gaze at this thing, I shut out both reflection and anticipation, and forget, that, with an assurance as much deeper as I am more than the leaf, I may be sure, that what I call fading and falling in is also ripening and gathering; and the time for the true life to be gathered, whenever it may be, is that life's October, and as divine in its way as *the May was for its spring?*

Because this truth is one with a vaster; namely, that not one aspect in life ought to fill my sight to the exclusion of another, but life altogether must be seen as we watch men fade and fall. "All leaves are builders," says Ruskin; "but they are to be divided into two orders,—those that build by the sword, and those that build by the shield." I would see every life as that most perfect of all seers into leaf-life sees every leaf. It may be that our lives are the most obscure and powerless for good this earth ever bore on her breast: I tell you, if we are trying to be what we can be, then the life of every one of us casts its speck of grateful shadow somewhere, holds itself somehow up to the sun and rain, fights its way with some poor success against storm and fire and foe and parasite; or it stands sternly, in these great days, shoulder to shoulder with its comrades, a strong tower of defence, to guard what we have won in our war for humanity, resolute not to fall in that trap the devil always sets for a generous people, of giving up in the treaty what they won in the fight. For it is true, and truest of all, that not the things which satisfy the world's heart easily; not purple grape, and golden apple, and ripe grain, and brown seed, and roses and asters; not the noble and beautiful, over which men rejoice and are glad,—are alone the fruit on the tree of life; but the leaf, faded, ragged and unnoticed, is fruit too; falling, when its day is done, it falls honorably; dying, it dies well; its work well done, and the world is better by the measure of what one poor leaf may do for its life.

All honor to the great men who so patiently and steadily broke through the triple armor that guarded the heart of the rebellion; sprang over the fastnesses of Georgia to paralyze its right hand, and swept bareheaded through the broken ranks of our men, shouting our battle-cry so grandly, that they went storming back like a whirlwind when they heard it, and wrenched a victory out of the very jaws of defeat! And honor to the man whose heart was quiet in the dreadful days of the Wilderness, when only a quiet heart and a mighty, with God's great blessing, could avail us! Above all, honor to the great, steady soul, whose counsel guided, whose truth moulded, whose devotion sanctified, and whose life and death made

glorious the land that had given him birth, and honored him, and elected him to the greatest place a man can fill! These men, and all like them, are fruit. Let their names be said and sung in every loyal heart and home, and written in letters of living light for men to read in the ages to come.

Ay, but I know of others as good and true. Leaves, nothing but leaves. They were swept down in the storms of battle, they withered in the swamps and the sun, they faded out of our homes and are dead; or they live and strive, casting their shield, standing close, working the work of Him that sent them. All honor to the common soldier, the common laborer, the poor teacher, the man and woman everywhere, unknown and yet well known,—with no name to live, but bearing, in all they are and all they do, the assurance of the life everlasting! For as every leaf on every tree is, by the tenure of its life, a mediator and saviour, standing between the hard rock and living man, the bridge between life and death,—so this unknown man or woman, this common soldier or common worker, is fruit, in being leaf and falling, scorched by battle-fires or chilled by night damps; or, dying, worn out by toiling in the field of the world. Not one such man or woman has lived and striven and died in vain. There may be no monument to tell how they died or where they rest; but what they have done is their monument. The leaves of their tree are for the healing of the nations.

Mother, you think the little one that was taken from you could be nothing to the world; it faded so soon. Be sure, the leaf that lives only for a day is something to the tree; it has not lived in vain. This had been a poorer world, had any leaf of a day never bloomed; and so your little child has not only made you a richer woman than you possibly could have been had it never been born, but its touch of bloom has helped the world to bloom. It did not fall, as it could not spring, without the will of our Father; and, if you did but know it, its autumn was as true as its spring, and both were included in its few brief moments of life.

And this is the way the lesson of the leaf comes home to us *all*. We see about us other lives, noble and fruitful; and say,

"If I could only do as that man or woman is doing; if I could accomplish some great thing that would be a world's wonder and blessing,—then, I think, I could die gladly. But the Master comes, seeking fruit and finding none. I plod on at my desk; I work in my home; I weary at my task,—unknown, unnoticed, unprofitable, and nobody." Well, my friend, I think discontent is as good a thing in its place as life has in its treasury. If you are young, there is probably hope for you in something like the measure of your discontent; and, if you are not young, that discontent is always good which can bring you into a larger activity. I know not but it is good to be always a little discontented. It is a sign, as when the dove fluttered to the window of the ark, that there are olive leaves outside for the plucking. Still, I tell you, the question for most of us to solve is not, Am I fruit? but Am I a leaf? I take it, if we are to be fruit, we shall be by some deep predestination; and what we shall have to do in that case will be to keep as sound as we can to the core. But, if I am not fruit, then I am leaf; and leaf is fruit in its own order. Do I cast a mite of shadow; do I beautify ever so small a piece of blank barrenness; do I help along, in the measure of my one-leaf power, in forming, if not fruit, then timber? because this question answered right, I have answered every other.

Let me make this sure; and then I may be sure of this also, that the nipping frosts of the autumn, when they come, will be as divine to me as the dewy splendors of June. A falling leaf, I shall fall honorably; and the spirit, returning to the God who gave it, will again be set to do the greatest, and by consequence the most blessed, thing it can do; while this frame, the faded leaf, will wait for the morning of its resurrection. For this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. And when a man reaches this faith, he will not fear death any more than he fears life —

"Fear death! to feel the fog at my throat,  
The mist on my face,  
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote  
I am nearing the place;

The power of the night, the press of the storm,  
 The post of the foe,—  
 Where he stands, the arch fear, in a visible form,  
 And the strong man must go !  
 No ; let me feel all of it ; fare like my peers  
 Who have met him of old ;  
 Bear the brunt ; in a moment pay life's whole arrears  
 Of pain, darkness, and cold ;  
 For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave.  
 The dark minutes at end,  
 Then the elements rage ; and the voices that rave  
 Shall soften and blend,—  
 Shall change, and become,  
 First a peace, then a joy, then thy breast.  
 O thou soul of my soul, I shall meet thee again,  
 And with God be the rest !

## III.

## The Treasures of the Snow.

MEDITATING through the week what I should say to you to-day, my mind at last began to turn steadily toward the snow that was falling all day long between the window where I sat and my church, covering the city with its white robe to be instantly soiled and torn, and casting an unspotted radiance over hundreds of miles of the land through which also it was my lot to travel. So I gradually became aware, that to-day I must speak to you about the snow, and its place in the world and life in which we are now witnessing its presence,—see what hint of the Divine blessing is revealed to us in this fair vesture of the winter,—the delight of our youth, the touching image of the white age before the opening of the new spring, and the fair shroud, that, in the black winter days, covers all the graves.

I read a story once of what had happened just before in one of the new English colonies. It was a land where the snow fell but seldom. The children had grown up to a good age, without once seeing it. One day, the thick flakes began to fall ; the children were terrified ; they shrank back from it,—did not know what to make of it : but the parents ran out to welcome what it was the first impulse of the children to fear.

The unknown wonder of the one was the welcome visitor of the other, bringing hosts of kindly memories. It melted as it fell, was what we now watch with disgust on sloppy days, and call neither one thing nor the other. But, as these men and women saw the feathery fleece falling for the first time in their new home on the other side of the world, it seemed to bring the blessings of the old home on its wings, to make their past and present more intimately one. It was a means of grace to them; it came down cold out of the heavens; but their hearts became all aglow, as it touched them.

I had written as far as this, when a lady came to my study, and I read the incident to her.—“I know something as good as that,” she said. “I had a friend who went south, out of the reach of the snow, lived there many years, and then came north again. When the first snow fell after her return, she ran out to meet it with all the delight of a child, caught a flake in her hand and kissed it.” A flake in her hand to kiss,—she could not resist the impulse. It was an old friend she had nearly forgotten, as welcome as the flowers in May. The philosopher could tell her, to be sure, that this was not the snow that used to fall about the old homestead. She knew better: it was the same snow, because she was the same woman: the identity was in her own nature. It was a hint of that better life to come, in which we are not to reckon by then and now, by past and present,—what was, and is not, and never can be again; but by an eternal now, fresh and full as the heart of a great ocean.

It is notable that there is but one instance of an actual snow-fall in the Bible; and even that is rather a recollection than a record. It is in the Second Book of Samuel, where, speaking of a mighty man, the chronicler says he slew a lion in the midst of a pit, in the time of snow. If the man and the lion were in the pit together, it was a fine piece of valor; but if it was done as the same thing is done now in Africa, where a pit is dug into which the lion falls and then is killed from above, one cannot but think, that the lion might have had more to say about it, had the thing been done on the open plain and in warm weather. In the poetry of the



elder Scriptures, the references to the snow are far more thick-strewn than in the histories, showing how the presence of the white glory melted into the souls of those most open to all the influences of heaven, summer and winter alike. "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?" the Almighty is made to ask impatient Job. And Job himself uses the term three times, always, however, in the sense of melting or melted snow, as if the man had not come into actual contact with it, but had seen it, as I saw it, melting and pouring from the mountains in Switzerland under the August sun. In the Psalms there is an exquisite hint of a snow-fall through the perfect stillness, and a magnificent storm piece into which the snow comes with other elements. In the Proverbs, again, there is a passage, how that there is nothing new under the sun, in the matter of ice-cold drinks in summer, where the writer says, "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so a faithful servant refreshes the soul of his master;" from which we may also infer, that even Solomon, in all his glory, had trouble with his servants. Isaiah has a noble image of the truth falling softly and fruitening the heart, as the snow falls and fruitens the earth. There is not a word about the snow from the lips of the Saviour; and it is only noticed at all in the New Testament in a secondary sense,—used as a comparison, never as an experience.

But to men that dwell, as we do, where the snow is our constant companion through a long winter, there is both opportunity and necessity to enter more deeply into its meaning, than any men have ever done who have only seen it at second-hand, crowning Hermon with its radiance, and lying white in the ravines of Lebanon. We can see, if we will, how there is that in it which at once illustrates the law, supplements the gospel, and reveals the Almighty as intimately and wonderfully present in the snows of winter as in the blossoms of spring, or the greenery of summer, or the gold of the autumn of the year. When John Foster learned that snow had been detected on the poles of Mars, the white light of it growing large in what must be the planet's winter, and then small again in his summer, it made him very sad. He argued, that the presence

of the snow meant cold ; cold, suffering ; suffering, sin ; and sin, on another planet,—a frightful extension of the curse and fall. It made him sad, because, great man as he was, he lived in the belief that this fair world was wrecked and ruined in the biting of an apple ; that a man and woman, as inexperienced as two babies, were placed in a position to do a mischief for which I am at a loss to find a comparison. I thought of myself as placing my five-year old boy on the locomotive of a great train, and giving him the lever, with a strong temptation to turn it, and a strict command to let it alone ; then leaving him to his own devices, and the passengers to their doom. But the illustration is too feeble to convey the idea of the common doctrine of the Fall. It was the man's misfortune, that, otherwise so great and good, he could permit his soul to be bolted fast in a prison so dark, that the very stars in heaven were no better to him than a great penitentiary and graveyard.

“There is no such thing in nature as bad weather,” James Hogg used to say ; and certainly he got his share of all the weathers possible to bleak the moorlands of Scotland : and Coleridge said, “In nature there is nothing melancholy.” And both philosopher and shepherd, in saying such things, touched the brighter and better belief, dawning now on the world in the liberal faith. That the snow was on Hermon when Adam was in Eden before the Fall,—did not come for a curse there or anywhere, but a blessing ; not to work ruin on the snow-line of Ararat, any more than on the wheat-fields of Wisconsin ; and is as innocent of our sins, this way or that, as the white robe of an angel. And so the whole drift of our discovery of the nature of the snow, is at the same time a revelation of its grace and goodness.

I look out of my window at the whirling tempest, or set my face against it grimly on the street, or see it descending and covering a hundred leagues of wintry land ; and shudder, if I am in a shuddering mood, and say, “God help the poor !” and am, perhaps, content enough to let God help them, as I creep back into my own snug nest. But, while I am sheltering there, let me take Scoresby's book on the Arctic Regions, or Glaisher's

book on the Snow, and watch, to my endless wonder, what beauty is in a snow-flake.

That is not a rack of whirling wintry chaos I see!—the churning of wind and water and frost into a white fury; the desolation of a world in which God is not. There is not an atom of snow in this whole wide belt of the storm that is not in itself a gem of exquisite outline and inline, not any two of those innumerable myriads of flakes alike, and yet they all dart out into the same wonderful six-rayed glory. I may grind them, if I can, into a more impalpable powder than this into which they are crushed in these roaring mills of God; then put the smallest atom under my microscope; and, if I can get one fair glance at it, I will still see the perfect unlike sixfold likeness, no more, no less, as inexhaustible in its loveliness as the power that made it. So the flakes call to us for ever through the moan and shriek of the storm, or whisper as they fall in silence, and rest on the land like wool, “Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?” And tell us how the revelation of the microscope chords with the words of the Master, about the robing of a lily, that, down to the minutest and most common thing, the hand of their Maker and our Father reaches, as perfectly as up to the most celestial and divine. It is disorder to us; it is order to him. He directs the storm. Snow and hail, fire and vapor, and stormy wind, fulfil his word. Not a sparrow or a snow-flake falleth to the ground without the will of your Father. I ask the star, as it melts on my hand, “What proof can you give me that you are not born of the mere spume of the tempest?” It looks at me from beneath its six-rayed crown, and answers, “I am no more than the Atlantic. I come out of order and light, a child of the day. I am on the Lord’s side. I come from heaven, as the good angels come, to assure you afresh of its immanence, and help you to enter in and be saved.”

Then this beauty chords again with the blessing of the snow. In great cities we think little of snow, except as it brings good sleighing or evil walking, or the threat of the policeman if we do not clean our sidewalks, or thin congregations, or discomfort to our feet, or irregular mails and trains. Indeed I doubt

whether the snow was ever meant for the city. It is as thoroughly out of contrast in it as a stray lamb, and has no more power to hold its white fleece whole, and live on our streets. But, in the country, we instantly find what this means: "He giveth snow like wool." Between the surface of the earth and the surface of the snow, the measured difference in temperature is sometimes forty degrees: It is always welcome in these latitudes, when it comes early and in plenty, and stays well on the land; for then the farmer knows that the things will be hopped away snug and warm, that must survive the winter. In the Lake-Superior region, much colder than our own,—where the snow falls with the first frosts, and stays to the edge of summer,—many of the plants we dig up, and put into our cellars, are left in the ground with perfect safety, because "He giveth snow like wool" to preserve them under its warm fleece. In my readings, I have found many curious records of persons buried under the snow, surviving through long spans of time; but, if a hand or a foot was exposed, that was lost.

When I was at Fort Donelson, and there heard that grand story, how the Iowa Second went over the ramparts, and stayed, sleeping all night in the snow, my informant said, "I looked along the line where I knew they must be next morning; but all I could see was a row of white mounds, out of which they rose presently, shaking the snow from their blankets, and resuming order of battle."—"And was it not a fearful thing to lie under that covering?" I said to one of the men afterward. "Well," he replied, "it wasn't quite so warm as some places I have slept in; still it was not at all so bad as you imagine."

The snow is, in its measure, the power of God unto salvation. It is not an aggravation of winter, but a defence against it. Philosophy blends with science to tell of its grace and goodness. We talk to our children of the good fairies, in which, alas for them! they believe no more than we do. We might do better, if we told them the truth about such a thing as the snow,—how God sends, in the snow-flakes, a guardian angel for every grass-blade and flower-seed he will keep from the frost, to protect them first, and then to sink into their hearts, and rise with them in the morning of their resurrection. And then I would

try to see what I taught,—the goodness of God in a snow-storm. It is something to see, for one hour, a snow-driven city,—to admire how all vileness is hidden for a few minutes out of sight, though they were no use except that in it. But, in the country, the snow casting its white robe of protection over the land,—gathering it as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings,—that is a sight which leads us again toward the heaven out of which the wonder comes. And so I would touch these snow-flakes less for what they prove than for what they are,—the testimony of a snow-drift to the Sermon on the Mount; the extension of Christ's great argument out of summer into winter. If God so shape the snow-star, can he fail finally to shape the soul? and if he giveth snow like wool, to hap the shivering seed; if he so clothe the land as well as the lily,—will he leave me naked?

But then I can see how the blessing of the snow comes home still more nearly and directly. It is good to watch the snow, as I have tried to do; to note—

"The tiny spherule traced with lines  
Of nature's geometric signs;"

and what an exact order and harmony is at the heart of the endless agitation of a snow-storm; and to realize something of the blessing that comes when "He giveth snow like wool." But there is a better blessing in the snow, that can come to us all, though we never saw a microscope or snow book, and know of the thing only as something thoroughly identified with winter.

"I think better of snow-storms," Prescott says, "since I find, that though they keep a man's body indoors, they bring his mind out." It has been said by another, that, while the land is more fruitful as you approach the tropics, what is taken out of the land is put into the man as you touch the snow. In Iceland, where they are shut out from the rest of the world through the greater part of the year, and—

"The housemates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm,"—

there has been a separats, and in its way, quite a noble, scholar-

ship, to which we owe the preservation of some of the most precious Sagas, fragments of the earliest history of our own race. If you will draw a line from Edinburgh southward until it touches just half-way in the measured distance of England and Scotland together, and then count the greatest names in each half for a long time back now,—Burns, Scott, Wordsworth, Watt, Arkwright, and the Stephensons, with others more than I can mention,—you will see, that, though London and the Universities are to the south of the line, the preponderance of genius and power is to the north; especially in those priceless instances of men who had to cleave their way upward out of the forge, coal-pit, and hungry farm-lands, to fame.

In our own country, this fact is still more striking and clear. Whatever line can live in our literature, so far has been written in the North. The most precious fruits in all the higher departments of life and learning have ripened within the snow-line. Nay, it is remarkable, that in the thin edge of land between Cincinnati or St. Louis and our own city, there is this difference, that, in the gravest times this nation has ever known, the great ballads, whose influence for good was incalculable,—ballads like the “Battle-cry of Freedom,”—came from the city that is set farthest in the snow. I mention these instances as hints of what I mean by that better blessing in the snow than the contemplation of its starry order and noble uses as it lies on the land. What every healthy man and woman feels, when, after the disheartening rains of the last weeks in the autumn, the first powder of the white blessing falls; and then, as winter deepens, the snow comes in good earnest, and—

“The whited air  
Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,”

that is the intimation of the difference between the snow present in, and absent from, our life.

So when I hear letters read from friends in the South, that tell how, while we are battling with the snow, they are enjoying the roses, I say, “Well, the rose had to come out of the snow. It is not a native and natural denizen of the southern, but of the northern, hemisphere.” That is true for one thing.

And then we *shall* have the roses, and we have the snow. Those dwellers in summer lands have the one blessing; we have both. What can they do when the question is asked of them, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?" but stand silent and conscious of their poverty, if they will but have the grace? For, not to dwell on that hearty and healthful recreation, only possible to a few of the dwellers in cities,—the pleasantness of sweeping through the snow in sleighs and good company, a means of grace by no means to be despised, providing always that the termination of your ride be not a tavern,—not to dwell on this, I say, the man whose lot is cast where the roses bloom outdoors in January might well exchange his roses for the final blessing that comes hidden in the snow.

When, on the edge of a wild winter night, the snow begins to come down thick and fast, darkening the heavens, covering the earth, muffling all sounds, foiling all sights; when the children rush home from school, and the father from business, and the shutters are fastened, and the curtains are drawn, and the supper is done, and the clear, open, wood or soft-coal fire is made up,—for one or the other of these I consider entirely indispensable to a right study of the treasures of the snow,—and all sit in the sweet light together, and try to remember one sick or poor for whom they have not done what they could, but are utterly unable; and the books are brought out, and the work, which, to be seasonable at such a time, should be just as good as play; and there is cheerful chat among the elders of far-away times, and prophecy among the youth of what shall be, to be fulfilled as God will and as they will; while still the snow falls and beats about the home, and hisses down into the fire; and the heart grows tender in its thankfulness, reaching out into the very wilderness, and crying with Burns,—

"Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,  
That, in the merry months o' spring,  
Delighted us to hear thee sing,—  
What comes o' thee?  
Whaur wilt thou cower thy chittering wing,  
And close thy ee?"

these, friends, are some of the treasures of the snow, as they lie most obviously open to our reverent study, inestimable, in their way, as the blossoms of the spring, the flowers of the summer, and the fruit of the autumn of the year.

It might be expected that I should now make an application: I have none to make. One thing only I can touch of the deeper spirit, beside what I have touched as I have gone along. We speak of the snow as of an image of death. It may be that; but it hides the everlasting life always under its robe,—the life to be revealed in due time, when all cold shadows shall melt away before the ascending sun, and we shall be, not unclothed, but clothed upon, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

JAN. 26, 1867.

#### IV.

### Light on a Hidden Way.

JOB iii. 23: "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid?"

"THE Book of Job," says Thomas Carlyle, "is one of the grandest things ever written with a pen; our first statement, in books, of the problem of the destiny of man, and the way God takes with him on this earth; grand in its simplicity and epic melody, sublime in its sorrow and reconciliation; a choral melody, old as the heart of man, soft as the summer midnight, wonderful as the world with its seas and stars; and there is no other thing in the Bible, or out of it, of equal literary merit." It is not possible now to tell whether the book is a real history, or a sort of oriental drama. The question is one that will always keep the critics hard at work, so long as there are rational, and what ought in all fairness to be called not rational, schools in theology. My own idea is, that the rude outline of the history was floating about the desert, as the history of Lear or Macbeth floated about in latter times among our own fore-elders; that, like those great dramas, it was taken into the heart of some man now forgotten, and came out again endowed with this wondrous quality of inspiration and life, that will bear it onward through all time. But, whatever the truth may



be in this direction, this is clear, that, when Job put the question I have taken for a text, he was as far down in the world as a man can be who is not abased by sin. He had been the richest man in the country, honored by all that knew him, for his wisdom, his goodness, or his money. He was now so poor, that he says, men derided him whose father he would not have set with the dogs of his flock. He had been a sound, healthy man, full of human impulses and activities; had been sight to the blind, feet to the lame, a father to the poor, a defender of the oppressed. He was now a diseased and broken man, sitting on the ashes of a ruined home; his fires all gone out; his household gods all shattered; his children all dead; and his wife, the mother of his ten children, lost to the mighty love which will take ever so delicate but true-hearted woman at such a time, and make her a tower of strength to the man. His wife—who should have stood, as the angels stand, at once by his side and above him—turned on him in his uttermost sorrow, and said, “Curse God, and die.”

Two things, in this sad time, seem to have smitten Job with most unconquerable pain. First, he could not make his condition chord with his conviction of what ought to have happened. He had been trained to believe in the axiom we put up in our Sunday schools, that to be good is to be happy. Now he *had* been good, and yet here he was as miserable as it was possible for a man to be. And the worst of all was, he could not deaden down to the level of his misery. The light given him on the divine justice would not let him rest. His subtle spirit, piercing, restless, dissatisfied, tried him every moment. Questions like these came up in his mind: “Why have I lost my money? I made it honestly, and made good use of it. Why is my home ruined? I never brought upon it one shadow of disgrace. Why am I bereaven of my children, and worse than bereaven of my wife? If this is the result of goodness, where is cause and effect? What is there to hold on by, if all this misery and mildew can come of upright, downright truth and purity?” Questions like these forced themselves upon him, and would not be silenced. There was but one way in which they could have been silenced. If this spirit that troubled him

could have whispered, "Now, Job, what is the use of your whining? You know that you have got just what you deserve; that you are a poor, old pewter Pecksniff, with not one grain of real silver about you. Your whole life has been a sham. You have said,—

‘No graven images may be worshipped,  
Save in the currency;  
Thou shalt not kill, but need not strive  
Officially to keep alive;  
Thou shalt not covet, but tradition  
Approves all forms of competition.’”

If the spirit could have spoken so to the man, he must have been dumb under a sense of the justice of his punishment; but there was no such sense for him: his entire life had been a good life, and the very light on his life in the past made his present way only all the darker.

Then the second element in Job's misery seems to lie in the fact, that there appeared to be light everywhere, except on his own life. If life would strike a fair average; if other good men had suffered too, or even bad men,—then he could bear it better. But the world went on just the same. The sun shone with as much splendor as on his wedding-day. The moon poured out her tides of molten gold, night fretted the blue vault with fires, trees blossomed, birds sang, young men and maidens danced under the palms. Other homes were full of gladness. This man had sold his clip for a great price: the lightning had slain Job's sheep. That man had done well in dates: the tornado had twisted Job's trees down. Nay, worst of all, here were *wicked* men, mighty in wealth; *their* houses in peace, without fear; *their* children established in their sight,—sending forth little ones like a flock, spending their days in prosperity, and yet saying, "Who is the Almighty that we should fear him?" while here he was, a poor wreck, stranded on a desolate shore; a broken man, crying, "Oh that it were with me as in days gone by, when the candle of the Lord shone round about me; when I took my seat in the market-place, and justice was my robe and diadem! When I think of it, I am confounded. One dieth in the fulness of his prosperity, wholly at ease and

quiet: another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, not having tasted pleasure. How is it? What does it mean? Why is light given to a man whose way is hid?"

Now I suppose that not many men ever fall into such supreme desolation as this, that is made to centre in the life of this most sorrowful man. "It is the possible of that which in itself is only positive." But then it is true that one may reach out in all directions, and find men and women who are conscious of the light shining, but who cannot find their way; whose condition will not chord with their conception of life; who, in a certain sense, would be better if they were not so good. The very perfection of their nature is the way by which they are most easily bruised. Keen, earnest, onward, not satisfied to be below their own ideal, they are yet turned so wofully this way and that by adverse circumstances, that, at the last, they either come to accept their life as a doom, and bear it in grim silence; or they cut the masts when the storm comes, and drift a helpless hull broadside to the breakers, to go down finally like a stone.

Here is a young man newly come to your city, fresh from his good country home. He is resolved to make a mark,—to be the best sort of a man. He is full of budding energies and capabilities. Let him once get hold fairly, and he is sure to succeed. But he finds it difficult to start: places are not plenty. It is very hard, up-hill work: he strives, and stays poor. He does not find the way. At last he is hungry and faint in the wilderness, alone; and the Devil comes, tempting him. He is a very nice person probably, wears a good coat, lives in good style; it may be he has a pew in church. He says, "Here is something I want done: if you will do it, you will get what *you* want, the kingdom of the world. It is not what puritanic people call right, to be sure; but there is no harm in it. Everybody does it; and, if you do it, you are sure to succeed." That young man is in danger, just as his life rises in strong, fierce jets, and is full of latent power. If he take counsel of his impatience, he will kneel down there and then, and do as he is bid. And it is possible that he will get what he bargained for, but with this difference, that, while he stands fast in his integrity, though

there is no way, the light shines ; when he has once gone down, the way may be open, but the light is gone. Or he succeeds in all manly integrity, makes his fortune, and then gradually slides into a belief in a Providence like that Job believed in before his trouble came,—a Providence that will keep him prosperous, because he is a good man : a great crash comes, and he loses all, including his belief in God. Or he makes a fortune, and holds it, but then forgets that money to a man is like water to a plant,—only useful so long as it promotes growth. Like water in the fountain or water in the tank, keep it flowing, and it blesses ; keep it stagnant, and it kills.

The maiden comes out of her home, with the bloom of youth on her soul,—a wonder of love and trust. She walks wistfully down the world, and gradually is aware, that she will never meet the man she can wed. Yet her heart is full of love, and there are moments when she feels very *very* sad, trying to reconcile her nature to her condition ; and *she* cries, “Why is light given, when the way is hid ?” Or she weds, believing that she has found a man sent from God for her, to find afterward, perhaps, that she is mistaken by half a diameter. Yet she will strive hard and long to see in him the man God has put into her heart, but will give it up at the last, and say, “Why is light given, when the way is hid ?”

Or the man and woman are set each to each, like perfect music, unto noble words ; but one is taken, and the other left. John Wilson, walking down the world with such a wife by his side, said, “I shall die in my nest : I shall see no sorrow.” But, one morning, he stood before his class, and said, “Gentlemen, I have not examined your essays : I could not see to read them in the valley of the shadow of death where I have been ;” and then the strong man bowed himself, and wept sore, and went to his darkened home.

Or the man and woman live in sweet accord ; but their home is too quiet, or it ripples over with sweet laughter, and then passes again into silence.

Or here, in the larger life, is a prince and leader of men. The roots of his power begin to ramify through all the land. He seems to be the one indispensable man of the time. In the sorest need of all, he is smitten down, and dies.

Or here is a great cause, reaching back into a great principle. The light of the divine justice shines on the principle, and so wins men to it that they cannot rest. Year after year, they will stand suffering, toiling, dying for their cause; but the way does not open. Yet they cannot choose but follow the light. If the light had not shone so in our own land, we might have ground along in some sort of affinity to slavery. It was light poured on the conscience of the nation, that brought on the war; it was light shining through the darkness, that kept the nation steady. Had no such light shone, we should have constructed a new Union, with the shackle of the slave for a wedding-ring. But the light stood like a wall of fire: yet how long it was only a light shining on a hidden way!—our homes black with desolation; fathers, mothers, wives, only putting on a cheerful look, because they would not by their sadness dishearten the great heart of the nation.

And so, I say, in men and nations you will find everywhere this discord between the longing that is in the soul, and what the man can do. Our life, as some one has said of the Cathedral of Cologne, seems to be a broken promise made to God; and—

“How blest we should be,  
 We have always believed,  
 Had we really achieved  
 What we nearly achieved!  
 The thought that most thrilled  
 Our existence is one  
 That before we could frame it  
 In language is gone.  
 The more we gaze up into heaven,  
 The more do we feel our gaze fail.  
 All attempts to explore,  
 With earth's finite insight,  
 Heaven's infinite gladness,  
 Is baffled by something  
 Like infinite sadness.”

Now trying, secondly, to find some solution of this question, I want to say frankly, that I cannot pretend to make the mystery all clear, so that it will give you no more trouble; because I cannot put a girdle round the world in forty minutes, and because a full solution must depend greatly on our own

dissolution. "Let the light enter," said the great German, and then—died. I believe, also, that the man who thinks he has left nothing unexplained, in the mystery of providence and life, has rather explained nothing. I listen to him, if I am in trouble; and then I go home, and break my heart all the same; because I see that he has not only not cleared up the mystery, but that he does not know enough about it to trouble him. The "Principia" and the Single Rule of Three are alike simple and easy to him, because he does not know the Rule of Three. And so I cannot be satisfied with the last words which some later hand has added to the book that holds this sad history. They tell us how Job has all his property doubled, to the last ass and camel,—has seven sons again and three daughters, has entire satisfaction of all his accusers, lives a hundred and forty years, sees four generations of his line, and then dies—satisfied. Need I say that this solution will not stand the test of life; that if life, on the average, came out so from its most trying ordeal, there would be little need for a sermon like this? For then every life would be an open, self-contained providence and the last page in time would vindicate the first. Men do not so live and die; and such cannot have been the primitive conclusion of the history. It has deeper meaning and a sublimer justification, or it had never been inspired by the Holy Ghost.

And this is sure to suggest itself to you, as you read the history, that Job, in his trouble, would have lost nothing and gained very much, if he had not been so hasty in coming to the conclusion, that God had left him, that life was a mere apple of Sodom, that he had backed up to great walls of fate, and that he had not a friend left on earth. His soul, looking through her darkened windows, concluded the heavens were dark. The nerve, quivering at the gentlest touch, mistook the ministration of mercy for a blow. He might have found some cool shelter for his agony: he preferred to sit on the ashes in the burning sun. He knew not where the next robe was to come from: this did not deter him from tearing to shreds the robe that was to shelter him from the keen winds. It was a dreadful trial at the best; it was worse for his way

of meeting it ; and, when he was at once in the worst health and temper possible, he said, "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid ?" Is not this now, as it was then, one of the most serious mistakes that can be made ? I try to solve great problems of providence, perhaps, when I am so unstrung as to be entirely unfitted to touch their more subtle, delicate, and far-reaching harmonies. As well might you decide on some exquisite anthem when your organ is broken, and conclude there is no music in it because you can make no music of it, as, in such a condition of the life and such a temper of the spirit, try to find these great harmonies of God. When I am in trouble, then, and darkness comes down on me like a pall, the first question ought to be, "How much of this unbelief about providence and life, like Cowper's sense of the unpardonable sin, comes from the most material disorganization ? Is the darkness I feel in the soul, or is it on the windows through which the soul must see ?" Then, clear on this matter, the man tried so will endeavour to stand at the first, where this sad-hearted man stood at the last, in the shadow of the Almighty, if he *must* stand in a shadow, and hold on to the confidence that somewhere within all this trial is the eternal, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

It is a wonderful story. Job and his friends speculate all about the mystery, and their conclusions from their premises are entirely correct ; but they have forgotten to take in the separate sovereign will of God, as working out a great purpose in the man's life, by which he is to be lifted into a grauder reach of insight and experience than ever he had before. Job said, "I suffer, I am in darkness and disappointment and pain, because it is fate." Job's friends said, "No : you suffer because you have sinned. Rushes never grow without mire." They were both wrong, and all wrong. He suffered because that was the divine way of bringing him out of his sleek, self-satisfied content ; and when, through suffering, that was done, he said, "I have heard of Thee with mine ears, but now mine eye seeth thee." There is a bird, it is said, that will never learn the song his master will have him sing, while his cage is full of light. He listens, and learns a snatch of this, a trill

of that, a polyglott of all the songs in the grove, but never a separate and entire melody of his own. But the master covers his cage,—makes the way all dark about him: then he will listen, and listen to the one song he has to sing; and try and try, and try again, until at the last his heart is full of it: then, when he has caught the melody, the cage is uncovered. When there is light on the song, there is no need for darkness on the way. Friends, if I had never gone into darkened rooms, where the soul stands at the parting of the worlds; or sat down beside widows and little children, when the desire of their eyes was taken away with a stroke; or grasped the hands of strong men, when all they had toiled for was gone,—nothing left but honor; or ministered to men mangled on the battle-field, beyond all telling; and heard, in *all* these places where darkness was on the way, melodies, *melodies* that I never heard among the common places of prosperity,—I could not be so sure as I am, that God often darkens the way that the melody may grow clear and entire in the soul.

Then if this man could have known,—as he sat there in the ashes, bruising his heart on this problem of providence,—that, in the trouble that had come upon him, he was doing what one man may do to work out the problem of the world, he might again have taken courage. No man lives to himself. Job's life is but your life and mine, written in larger text. What we are all doing, as we stand in our lot, steady to our manliness or womanliness in our black days, is to tell, in its measure, on the life and faith of every good man coming after us, though our name may be forgotten. There is a story in the annals of science touching this principle, that we cannot struggle faithfully with these things, and leave them as we found them. Plato, piercing here and there with his wonderful Greek eyes,—

“Searching through all he felt and saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
To reach the law within the law,”—

was impressed by the suggestive beauty of the elliptic figure. He tried to search out its full meaning, but died without the sight. A century and a half after Plato, Apollonius came,



was arrested in the same way, took up the question where Plato left it, tried to find out its full meanings, and died without the sight. "And so," says a fine writer recently, "for eighteen centuries, some of the best minds were fascinated by this problem,—drew from it strength and discipline ; and yet, in all this time, the problem was an abstract form, a beautiful or painful speculation." It did not open out into any harmonious principle. There was a light on the thing, but no light on the way. In the full time, Kepler came ; sat down to the study ; and by what we call the suggestion of genius, but ought to call the inspiration of the Almighty, found that the orbits of the planets were elliptical. He died. Then Newton was born, took up the problem where Kepler had laid it down, made all the established facts the base of his mightier labours ; and, when he had done, he had shown that this figure, this problem that had held men spellbound through the ages, is a prime element in the law of universal gravitation,—at once the most beautiful theory, and the most absolute conclusion of science. Then men could see how it was, *because* God had made the light shine on the thing, that the way was found. From Newton back to Plato, in true apostolic order, every man, bending over this mystery of a light where there was no way, wrestling faithfully with it, had not only grown more noble in his own soul in the struggle, but had done his share toward the solution found by this greatest and last who was also "born under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons."

So, I tell you, in this restless search for a condition that shall answer to our conception ; this fascination that compels us to search out the elliptic of providence,—the geometric certainty underlying the apparent eccentricity. And every struggle to find this certainty ; every endeavour to plumb the deepest causes of the discord between what the nature bears and what the soul believes ; every striving to find the God of our loftiest faith in our darkest day, will, in some way, aid the demonstration, until, in the full time, some Newton of the soul will come, and, gathering the result of all these struggles between our conception of life and our condition in life, will

make it the base of some vast generalization, that will bring the ripest conclusions of the science of providence into perfect accord with the old, grand apostolic revelation, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." We wrong the deepest revelations of life, when we are not content to let this one little segment in the arc of our existence stand in its own simple, separate intention, whether it be gladness or gloom; and trust surely, if we are faithful, that the full and perfect intention must come out in the full range of our being.

God seldom, perhaps never, works out his *visible* purpose in one life: how, then, shall he in one life work out his perfect will? The dumb poetry in William Burns the father had to wait for Robert Burns the son. Bernardo waited to be perfected in his son Torquato Tasso; William Herschel left many a problem in the heavens for John Herschel to make clear; Leopold Mozart wrestled with melodies that Chrysostom Mozart found afterwards singing of themselves in every chamber of his brain; and Raymond Bonheur needed his daughter Rosa to come and paint out his pictures for him.

Dr. Reid has said, that, when the bee makes its cell so geometrically, the geometry is not in the bee, but in the geometrician that made the bee. Alas, if in the Maker there is no such order for us as there is for the bee! If God so instruct the bee; if God so feed the bird; if even the lions, roaring after their prey, seek their meat from God; if he not only holds the linnnet on the spray, but the lion on the spring,—how shall we dare lose heart and hope?

So, then, while we may not know what trials wait on any of us, we can believe, that as the days in which this man wrestled with his dark maladies are the only days that make him worth remembrance, and but for which his name had never been written in the book of life; so the days through which we struggle, finding no way but never losing the light, will be the most significant we are called to live. Indeed men in all ages have wrestled with this problem of the difference between the conception and the condition. Literature is full of these appeals, from the doom that is on us to the love that is over us,

—from the God we *fear* to the God we *worship*. The very Christ cries once, "My God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?" Yet never did our noblest and best, our apostles, martyrs, and confessors, flinch finally from their trust, that God is light ; that life is divine ; that there is a way, though we may not see it ; and have gone singing of their deep confidence, by fire and cross into the shadow of death. It is true, nay, it is truest of all, that "men who suffered countless ills, in battles for the true and just," have had the strongest conviction, like old Latimer, that a way would open in those moments when it seemed most impossible. Their light on the *thing* brought a commanding assurance, that there must somewhere, sometime, be light on the *way*.

"I say to thee, do thou repeat  
To the first man that thou shalt meet  
In lane, highway, or open street,—

That he, and we, and all men, move  
Under a canopy of love  
As broad as the blue sky above ;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain,  
And anguish,—these are shadows vain,  
That death itself shall not remain ;

That weary deserts we may tread,  
Dreary perplexities may thread,  
Through dark ways underground be led ;

Yet we, on divers shores now cast,  
Shall meet, when this dark storm is past,  
Safe in our Father's home at last.

And, ere thou leave him, say thou this,  
Yet one thing more : they only miss  
The speedy winning of that bliss,—

Who will not count it true, that love,  
Blessing, *not* cursing, rules above ;  
And that in this we live and move.

And one thing further : let him know  
That, to believe these things are so,  
This firm faith never to forego.

In spite of all that seems at strife  
With blessing—all with cursing rife  
That this is blessing, this is life."

## V.

*The Folly of Solomon.*

ECCLES. i. 2 : "All is vanity."

ALMOST three thousand years ago, a little child was born to David, King of Israel, whose advent was felt to be such a blessing that he was called Solomon, or "Peace." He was carefully reared, as befitted the future ruler of the nation; had natural gifts of surpassing excellence; was diligent in their improvement; and, so far as we can now ascertain, was the foremost scholar in the land at that time. The nation of which he was destined to be the ruler, was then touching the summit of its greatness! and this prince became to Jewry what Alexander, at a later day was to Greece, and Augustus to Rome. He came to the throne in due time, and the people shouted, "God save the king!" His public life opened beautifully and well. He made wise treaties as a king, and wonderful decisions as a judge. He developed commerce, manufactures, literature and art; edited and partly wrote, one book, which, in those early days got unquestioned canonization, and, in a measure deserved it.

He was also the founder and finisher of the first temple on Zion, and offered the first prayer at its consecration. That prayer has come down to us: it reveals a sincere and religious nature. Then he was a great student, philosopher, musician, and landscape gardener; created a beautiful home, and married a wife more of his free choice, than commonly falls to the lot of kings. In a word, one thinks he was about all a man can be, and gathered all a man can get, in this world, to make him content and happy. Then, when he had done, he wrote a sermon, in which he tried to tell what it was all worth. That sermon is the Book of Ecclesiastes, and its burden is the text I have read you. And I want to give you the kernel of the discourse, in a few representative sentences, selected from the whole book.

The preacher begins by declaring, that all the things that happen are an endless repetition. The sun rises

and sets; the wind veers round and round; the waters are lifted out of the sea, and poured in again. Man is a part of this endless round; race after race sweeps on, all alike and all alike forgotten; so that which has been shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun. "I have tried it," cries the preacher. "I was a king, and what can any man do more than a king? I tell you it is vanity; and you cannot make the crooked straight, or number what is wanting. Things are set fast as they are, and so they will stay; and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow. I tried pleasure, planted gardens, opened fountains, indulged in wine and mirth and music. I know exactly what these can do for a man; and there is no profit in them. I found them vanity; so I hated all my labor that I had done under the sun. Then I dipped into fatalism. I said, 'What is to be will be; there is a time for every thing under the sun,—a time to be born, a time to die; a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to love, and a time to hate; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to pull down, and a time to build up.' And, when the time comes, the man must do his work; but then this is vanity: for, if a man act so blindly, what is he more than a beast? There is no pre-eminence; fate is master of both; all spring from the dust, all go to the dust; all is vanity. Then I tried man. But I saw the oppressed, and they had no comforter; and the oppressor, and he had no comfort. So I praised the dead more than the living, and that which never knew life more than they both. For I saw that every man was for himself; and, though he had neither child nor brother, he never said, 'Why do I starve my life for gain?' All is vanity. What is a wise man more than a fool? Who can tell a man what is good, when all his days are as a shadow? Sorrow is better than laughter; the end is better than the beginning. A just man perishes by his own justice, while a wicked man prolongs his life in his wickedness. Nay, come to that, there is no just man on the earth. I have studied the thing out: there is not one man in a thousand upright, and not one woman in the world. Don't be righteous overmuch or wicked overmuch. I see the wicked get the reward of the good, and good the reward of the wicked.

A man has no better thing under the sun than to eat and drink and be merry; for there is no certainty. The dead know not anything. There is no wisdom or knowledge or device in the grave whither we all hasten. And the race is not to the swift, or the battle to the strong; or bread to the wise, or fame to the skilful. Servants ride on horses; princes trudge on foot. You cannot alter the thing: it is so, and so it will be. If you dig a pit, you will fall into it; if you move a hedge, a serpent will bite you; if you take down a wall, the stones will bruise you; if you listen, you will hear your servant curse you. Money will buy anything. All is vanity. Childhood and youth is vanity; old age is vanity. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

This, my friends, is the substance of this great man's last estimate of life. You read it, and, as you read, you watch the writer trying to fight down the black shadows as they rise. Here and there too all through his sermon, he will say a noble thing on the right side; as if the old power of piety was strong enough yet to burn through, and force its way to the parchment. But, when the best is said and done, the result is a belief in a God who exacts more than he gives, and punishes more readily than he blesses. He seems sometimes to think, if a man will take good care, there may be some small chance of content for him. Still he is all the while afraid he may say too much on that side, and is ready at every turn to let you see the death's head within the folds of his vesture. Here and there a pleasant note is just sounded, and you say, "Now we are to have a bit of gospel, or a song of thanksgiving." But the gospel is never heard; the song is never sung. The heavy, solemn chord beats along steadily to the last; and the burden is always, "All is vanity."

And so it is that this woful estimate of life has made this book by far the most difficult to understand in the whole range of the Scriptures. Down to the time of Jerome, there were pious Jews not a few who held that it had better be destroyed. It has taxed the ingenuity of commentators, who have differed over it as only commentators can. For the book has that about it that will be heard. The writer was, in such wisdom

as it was, the wisest man of his era. He had matchless opportunities of knowing what the life really is he condemns so sternly. He speaks to you with a most evident, sad, painful good faith, that makes you feel sure he means every word he says. And then the book is set fast among our Sacred Scriptures. The statements in it are as positive as any other. Solomon is as clear when he says, "Man has no pre-eminence over a beast," as John is when he says, "Beloved now are we the sons of God." So it comes to pass, that, if you take this book as it stands, and undertake to believe it, the result is very sad. It chills all piety, paralyzes all effort, hushes all prayer. If there is grief in wisdom, had I not better be a fool? If all labor is vanity, and a man is no better than a beast, and rewards and punishments are a dire confusion, and childhood and youth and old age is vanity, and to die is better than to live, because there is nothing worth living or dying for,—then this is—

"A life of nothings, nothing worth,—  
From that first nothing ere our birth  
To the last nothing under earth."

It cannot be denied, again, that the book is but the vocal utterance of many a silent sermon in many a lonely heart. It was this, no doubt, that made it the text-book of Voltaire and the bosom friend of Frederick the Great. Its monotonous of despair are echoed out of a thousand experiences. When a friend wished a great English statesman a happy new year. "Happy!" he said; "it had need be happier than the last, for in that I never new one happy day." When an English lawyer, whose life had seemed to be one long range of success, mounted the last step in his profession, he wrote, "I in a few weeks shall retire to dear Encombe, as a short resting-place between vexation and the grave." When one said to the great Rothschild, "You must be a happy man," he replied "I sleep with pistols under my pillow." The most brilliant man of the world in the last century said, "I have enjoyed all the pleasures of life, and I do not regret their loss; I have been behind the scenes, and seen the coarse pulleys and ropes and tallow-candles." And the most brilliant poet of the last generation

said, "The lapse of ages changes all but man, who ever has been, and will be, an unlucky rascal." And one of the finest promise, dying in his first prime, left us this estimate, that—

"All this passing scene  
Is a peevish April day;  
A little sun, a little rain,  
And then death sweeps along the plain,  
And all things fade away."

Nay, may I not leave these dead, and come to the living to find a legion of men in Europe and America, ready to indorse this as their own estimate of life,—men who feel that life is weary, and fear that death is but a dead, blank wall; who have come to consider the forces of life and nature things that grind on so immutably as to leave them no heart to pray; who see those whose life is a shame before heaven rosy and happy, and threescore and ten; while others, whose life had begun to be a very fountain of inspiration and blessing, are cut off in their prime? And so they cry, "How can there be a Divine Providence?" and ponder over life, and pare down faith to their contracting and contracted hope, until a living faith in God dies out of their heart; and then they lose a real faith in any thing, as Solomon did. For I tell you, that, as the outer life takes its deepest meaning from the soul, the inner life takes its deepest meaning from God; and, when that goes, all goes. When a man ceases to believe in God, he is in instant danger of ceasing to believe in any thing worth the name of belief. In open-eyed loyalty and trust, and trustful men and things, all these vanish, and he can see only—

"Good statesmen, who bring ruin on a state;  
Good patriots, who for a theory risk a cause;  
Good priests, who bring all good to jeopardy;  
Good Christians, who sit still in easy-chairs,  
And damn the general world for standing up."

Now, then, for all this, I have but one answer. *I cannot believe it.* In the deepest meaning of the truth and the life, this assertion that all is vanity is utterly untrue. It is no matter to me that the man who wrote it is sometimes called "the wisest man;" that he was in deadly earnest about it,



that it was his own woful experience ; and, if you could add to this, that an angel had come from heaven to re-affirm it. All this is gossamer before the conviction of every wholesome and healthy mind, that in this universe there is an infinitely different meaning. God never meant life to be vanity ; and life is not vanity. I care not that Solomon look at me out of his great sad eyes, and say so, while his heart breaks ; and that Dundas and Eldon and Byron and Kirke White range with him. I will not, you will not, and millions beside in the world and out of it will not, testify that all is vanity.

And that we are right and all such men wrong can be proven, I think, outside our own experience, on several different counts. For, first of all, this Solomon is not the right man to testify. When he said this of life, he was in no condition to tell the truth about it, and he did *not* tell the truth. Universal testimony makes this sermon the fruit of his old age. There is a dim tradition, that the book was found in fragments after his death, edited, and the last six verses added,—and they are the best in the book,—by another hand. If this book was the work of Solomon's old age, the fact of itself supplies the first reason why we have such a sermon ; for the man who wrote this sermon, and the youth who offered that noble prayer at the dedication of the temple, are not the same men. The young king knelt down in the bloom of his youth, when the fountains of life were pure and clean ; when through and through his soul great floods of power and grace rose to springtide every day ; when the processions of nature and providence, the numbers of the poet, the wisdom of the sage, the labors of the reformer, and the sacrifices of the patriot, were steeped for him in their rarest beauty, endowed with their loftiest meaning, and filled with their uttermost power. But that old king in the palace, writing his sermon, is weary and worn ; and, worst of all, the clear fountains of his nature are changed to puddles ; the fresh, strong life has been squandered away ; the delicate, divine perception blunted, clogged, and at last smothered to death. You know how, in his later life, this

man fell from his great estate ; and to gratify his passion and pride, outraged the most sacred ordinances, and neglected the most sacred duties, that can cluster round any life. His biographer compresses the whole sad story into one chapter ; but, if you will read that, you can see how fearfully he had fallen,—how haggard vices had supplanted fair virtues, and successful rebellion taken the place of “ God save the king.” It is when he sits in that splendid, cheerless home ; when the sceptre totters in his palsied hand, and the bloom of purity and grace has gone out of him ; when his sin has made him blind to the blessing of books and nature and home and God, and his bad life has magnetized bad men toward him, and driven good men away ; and his relation to woman is of such a nature as to drive him from the presence of such pure and noble women as, thank God, never fail out of the world, and never will ; satirists and Solomons to the contrary, notwithstanding ; it is when he has spent all this substance in riotous living, and reduced himself to an utter destitution of the heart and soul,—that he will write his final estimate of God, nature, life, death, books, and men and women. Can we wonder that such a man should write “ all is vanity,” when he had come to be the vanity he wrote ?

But, then, I ask you, was this the time to make the estimate, when the man was all dissonant to the touch of the divine finger ; or was that the time when every faculty was chorded and attuned, and he stood in harmony with life, and the experience on which his estimate was founded was the sweet music that came out of the communion of his soul with God ? Believe me, we cannot form the true estimate when the life is ruined. What he said when he was his best self, before his ruin, was true ; and the estimate he made, when he was a lower man, was as much out of true as the man was.

Then there was an error in this man's *method* of testing life, that I suspect to be at the root of much of the weariness that is still felt ; and that is, the man does not seem to have tried to be happy, in making others happy, in bringing one gleam more of gladness, or one pulse more of life,

into any soul save his own. In the sad days recorded here, nature, books, men, women, were worth to him just what they could do for him. When he gave up being good, and took to being wise, he never more drank at that fountain which is the source of all true blessedness, but made his wisdom a cistern ; and, lo ! it was cracked and fissured in every direction. He gave up the present sense of God in the soul ; the high uses of worship ; the inspiration hidden in great books ; the deep blessedness of being father, husband, friend, teacher, patriot, and reformer ; buried himself in his harem ; turned a deaf ear to all the pleadings of his better angel ; and, when he had come to this, who can wonder that all was vanity ?

But now I must state the reason, that to me is greatest of all, why I know all is *not* vanity. A thousand years after this sad sermon was written, there was born of the same great line another little child. He had no royal training, no waiting sceptre, no kingly palace, but the tender nurture of a noble mother, and, from the first, a wonderful nearness to God,—and that was all. He grew up in a 'country town that had become a proverb of worthlessness. The neighbors, when he is a man, cannot remember that he ever learned his letters. He stood at the carpenter's bench, working for his bread, until he was perhaps thirty years old ; and then it was given to him to preach another sermon, and make another estimate. He was endowed with a power to see into the nature of this world and its life, such as never fell to the lot of another on the earth. The good he knew, and the bad he knew, as I suppose it was never known before. The human heart was laid bare before him down to its deepest recesses. None ever felt, as he did, the curse of sin, or had such a perfect loyalty and love for holiness. Nature, Providence, Heaven, and Hell, were actual presences, solid certainties to his deep, true sight. He came out of the carpenter's shop ; and when he had pondered over this solemn question of life in the solitudes beyond Jordan, it was laid, I say, upon him, as it had been laid on his fore-elder long before, to preach on the mighty theme. That sermon also has come down to us. It was as sure to do that, as the sun was that shone when he was preaching

it ; and to me the difference between the two sermons bridges the whole distance between the two great estimates of life, taught on this side by the Saviour, and on that by Solomon.

Listen while I try the ring of a few sentences from each of them. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," cries the first preacher. "Blessed are the poor, blessed are the mourners, blessed are the quiet, blessed are the hungry for the right, blessed are the giving and forgiving, blessed are the pure-hearted, blessed are the peace-makers, and blessed are the sufferers for the right," cries the second. "Be not righteous overmuch," cries the first. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," cries the second. "That which befalleth a beast, befalleth a man," cries the first. "The very hairs of your head are numbered," cries the second. "There is no knowledge nor wisdom nor device in the grave," cries the first. "I go to prepare a place for you ; and I will come again, and take you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also," cries the second.

This last preacher tested life also. Whatever can be done to prove all is vanity, was done to him. Giving out blessing, getting back cursing. Surely, if ever man would write "Vanity of vanities" over life, this was the man to do it : if ever one has made life unspeakably noble and good through a perfect belief in it, it was this man. The madman crouching among the tombs, the lost woman on the street, the seaman on the wharf, and the beggar full of sores,—all stood in the first glory of a celestial life, as he saw them, the lily on the green sward, the bird on the spray, and the child in the gutter, claimed in his heart kinship with the cherubim and seraphim up in heaven. God was to him the Father. The future life was more of a reality than the present. He saw *resurgam* written over every grave, and could see past sorrow and pain, the perfect end, and say, "Of all that my Father has given me, I have lost nothing : he will raise it up at the last day."

Now, I look out at life with you, and we can no more solve some of its problems than could this sad-hearted king, because we have in our own lives some darkness or trouble like that which he felt. There are moments in our experience when

fate seems to block out prayer, when the awful steadfastness of nature comes in like a dead wall against providence, and the vision is clouded, and the heart is faint. It is because we have the black drop in our veins that we may ponder the great problems of life, sometimes until our hearts break, and yet be no nearer their solution,—what is either microscope or telescope to a blind man. But as I grieve over these things, and come no nearer, I hear this strong voice of a greater than Solomon, crying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Then, if I cannot see heaven of myself, let me look at it through his eyes. If earth grows empty and worthless to me, let me believe in what it was to him, and be sure that he is the Way the Truth and the Life; so, holding fast by faith in him, I may come at last to a faith in earth and heaven and life and the life to come, and all that is most indispensable to the soul. For so it is, that he is the Mediator between God and man; helps my unbelief; ever liveth to make intercession for me; that he is still eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; that he preaches deliverance to the captives, and the opening of prison doors to them that are bound. If I cannot pray because I see no reason, then that bended figure on Olivet is my reason. If I cannot distinguish between fate and providence, let me rejoice that he can, and that my blindness can make no difference to his blessing. So, under *this* Captain of my salvation, I shall be more than conqueror; and, while the mournful outcry is rising about me, "Vanity of vanities, all his vanity," in my heart shall be the confidence that all things work together for good.

"And nothing walks with aimless feet,  
And not one life shall be destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God has made the pile complete."

VI.  
Faith.

HEB xi. 1: "Faith . . . the evidence of things not seen."

WHEN the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has made this masterly definition of a true faith, he instantly proceeds to make the thing clear by illustration. He says, among other things, a man once started out from the old home, to settle in a new country. He did not know his destination, only his direction. Somewhere west by south lay the land he was to own; and so west by south he went. He was possessed by two great ideas: one was to make a new home; the other, to fill that home with children, and so become the founder of a family. He came to the land at last, and was sure about its being the right place, because the same thing occurred to assure him of it that had first led him to seek it. The voice in his soul, he had learned to know as the voice of God told him so.

But time went on. He lived to be an old man before he had one legitimate son; and died before that son—then getting into years, and very shiftless—had children born to him. And all the land he could call his own, when the end came, was a field he had bought years before, as a cemetery for his dead. This was what his life-long faith had brought him as a pledge that it was a faith and not a fancy,—a shiftless, childless son, and a graveyard. This man, says the writer, was your ancestor; and he lived and died as fully satisfied that every thing would come out right, as if he had seen the land in your possession these fifteen centuries, and seen you swarming as the stars in the sky for multitude.

Then he tells of another,—a man educated, refined, intellectual, and directly in the way of becoming almost any thing he could wish to be, in one of the foremost nations on the earth. In the country, at that time, there was an alien race,—ignorant, oppressed, and so hateful to those who oppressed them, that they never sat down together at the same table. In the outset of his career, that young man turned his back on all his bright prospects, took sides with the despised and hated

brickmakers,—for that was what they had come to ; gave up the society of cultivated men, the occupations of the scholar and gentleman, and the use that must have become a second nature ; went over and stood beside the poor multitude ; identified himself with them ; went to work as a shepherd, until the time should come to emancipate them from their thralldom ; pondered the thing over in the grassy solitudes of Midian ; and then, when he had got so full of it that he could be quiet no longer, went up to court, bearded the king in his palace, and demanded their freedom. That man, says this writer, was your lawgiver ; and he did this because he had the faith in the future which your ancestor had. Here, he said, is the making of a nation, and I am to make it. Across the desert is the land they are to occupy ; and I am to lead them to it. Forty years after, he was at the end of his career. All that time he had striven for the fulfilment of his purpose, had endured every thing and done every thing, with this faith in his heart,—that there was sure to be success at the end.

Then, when they were quite ready to go in and take the land, the man knew that for him all was over ; that the deep longing of eighty years was not to be given him ; he could never stand on the land he had made every sacrifice to reach. But there was a mountain-top that commanded the country : he would go there, and take one great look at it. He went up ; it lay glancing in the sun, as Switzerland lies about the feet of the Rhigi ; and, with the light of it in his eyes, he died. God's angel kissed him, and he slept. But, as he looked his last, he no more doubted that the nation for which, four-score years before, he had pawned his position, prospects, likings, and life, would live on that land, and be in some way what he had wrought for, than if he had seen it already dotted with their towers and towns. And this was his motive-power, "Faith . . . the evidence of things not seen."

What a mighty thing as a motive-power, then, this faith must be ! If a man is possessed by it, that something can be done ; in some sure sense, it is done already, and only waits its time to come into visible existence in the best way it can. Just as one of those noble groups John Rogers fashions for us

is done the moment the conception of it has struck his heart with a pang of delight, though he may not have so much as the lump of clay for his beginning ; while I might stand with the clay in my hand to doomsday, and not make what he does, because I could not have the "Faith . . . the evidence of things not seen."

Indeed this is the sense I would put on that strange saying of Jesus,—“If ye have faith to say to that mountain, ‘Be thou removed and cast into the sea,’ it shall be done,”—that what he wants to impress on us is not so much the mountain riven out of his deep fastnesses on the earth, as the faith abiding in its deeper fastnesses in the heart. “If ye have faith, it shall be done,” I conceive to be the true reading, as the true teaching is, What cannot be done, cannot be of faith. There can be no real faith in the soul toward the impossible ; but make sure that faith is there, and then you can form no conception of the surprises of power hidden in the heart of it.

And, trying to make this thing clear to you, I know of no better way to begin, than by saying, that faith is never that airy nothing which often usurps its place, and for which I can find no better name than fancy,—a feeling without fitness, an anticipation without an antecedent, an effect without a cause, a cipher without a unit.

In the dawn of his life, a lad will say, “I am going to be a merchant prince, or a metropolitan preacher.” It is a noble purpose, if it can sink into his soul, deepen and enrich his nature, and so become the ladder by which he will rise into the heaven of his hope. But if to be what he dreams he merely dreams, cribs his lessons, shirks his duties, and conducts himself generally like a loafer,—what he may call a faith is merely a very foolish fancy, founded on nothing, and sure to end in nothing but disappointment.

Or he may prepare a plan of his life at thirty, on the theory that this world, with all its treasures, is a sort of big sweet orange he can suck with an endless gusto, and then give Lazarus the skin ; and, whether he has money already or has to make it, is determined to have a good time, because he believes that was what orange and appetite are made for.



Now, is that a faith in the world and life? No: it is a fancy that will leave his orange at last as savorless as a potato-rind, or as bitter as soot; and set him some day longing to get the cup of cold water out of the hand of the meanest man he ever left to rot, if he could only hope to get with it the power that man has to quench his thirst. Or he will make ready for the life to come, by saying prayers, going through motions, making professions, shirking responsibilities, worrying down doubts, and pampering a minister. And he will call that faith. Is it faith? It is the merest fancy, the play of the imagination, to the hurt of the man, hurtful every time, and leading to tragical ends, whether in the day-dream of the idle boy or the awful soliloquies of Hamlet.

Fancies are never, at our peril, to be mistaken for faith. They may feel just as good, and in some wild way they are as good, to the maniac strutting in his crown of straw, as to the king on his throne. It is because they have no intimate and inevitable relation to the set and nature and law and life of things. And so they can never be the evidence of *things* not seen. A mere fancy, to a pure faith, is as the "Arabian Nights" to the Sermon on the Mount.

Then faith is not something standing clean at the other extreme from fancy, for which there is no better name than fatalism,—a condition numbers are continually drifting into, who, from their very earnestness, are in no danger of being sucked into the whirlpools of fancy; men who glance at the world and life through the night-glass of Mr. Buckle; who look backward and there is eternity, and forward and there is eternity; and feel all about them, and conclude that they are in the grasp of a power beside which what they can do to help themselves is about what a chip can do on the curve at Niagra.

And yet their nature may be far too bright and wholesome to permit them to feel, that the drift of things is not on the whole for good. They will be ready even to admit that "our souls are organ-pipes of diverse stop and various pitch, each with its proper note thrilling beneath the self-same touch of God." But, when a hard pinch comes, they smoke their pipe,

and refer it to Allah, or cover their face and refer it to Allah ; but never fight it out, inch by inch, with all their heart and soul, in the sure faith that things will be very much after all what they make them,—that the Father worketh hitherto, and they work. And these two things—the fancy that things will come to pass because we dream them, and the fatalism that they will come to pass because we cannot avoid them—are never to be mistaken for faith.

It is true that there is both a fancy and a fatalism that is perfectly sound and good,—the fancy that clothes the future to an earnest lad with a sure hope ; that keeps the world fresh and fair, as in natures like that of Leigh Hunt, when to most men it has become arid as desert dust ;—the bloom and poetry, thank God, by which men are converted, and become as little children. And there is a fatalism that touches the very centre of the circle of faith,—which Paul always had in his soul. When sounding out some mighty affirmation of the sovereignty of God, he would go right on, with a more perfect and trusting devotion to work in the line of it. Fancy and fatalism, are the strong handmaidens of faith : happy is the man whose faith they serve.

But what, then, is faith ? Can that be made clear ? I think it can ; and, to do it, I will go back to the illustrations I cited at the start ; very noble and good, as I doubt not you are aware, when they are divested of the unreal wonders the worship of the ages has gathered about them.

A young man feels in his heart the conviction, that there in the future is waiting for him a great destiny. Yet that destiny depends on his courage, and that courage on his constancy ; and it is only when each has opened into the other, that the three become that evidence of things not seen, on which he can die with his soul satisfied,—though all the land he had to show for the one promise was a graveyard ; and all the line for the other, a childless son. Another feels a conviction, that here at his hand is a great work to do,—a nation to create out of a degraded mob, and to settle in a land where it can carry out his ideas and its own destiny. But the conviction can be nothing without courage ; and courage, a mere rushing into the jaws of

destruction, without constancy. Only when forty years had gone, and the steady soul had fought its fight, did conviction, courage, and constancy ripen into the full certainty which shone in the eyes of the dying statesman, as he stood on Nebo, and death was swallowed up in victory. And yet it is clear, that, while courage and constancy in these men was essential to their faith, faith again was essential to their courage and constancy. These were the meat and drink on which the faith depended ; but the faith was the life for which the meat and drink were made. A dim, indefinable consciousness at first it was, that something was waiting in that direction, a treasure hid in that field somewhere, to be their own if they durst but sell all they had, and buy the field. Then, as bit by bit they paid the price in the pure gold of some new responsibility or sacrifice, the clear certainty took the place of the dim intimation, and faith became the evidence of things not seen.

This is the way a true faith always comes. Conversing once with a most faithful woman, I found that the way she came to be what she is lay at first along a dark path, in which she had to take one little timid step at a time. But, as she went on, she found all the more reason to take another and another, until God led her by a way she knew not, and brought her into a large place. Yet it was a long while before any step did not make the most painful drafts on both her courage and constancy. And so the whole drift of what man has done for man and God is the story of such a leading,—first a consciousness that the thing must be done, then a spark of courage to try and do it ; then a constancy that endures to the end ; and then, whatever the end may be,—the prison or the palace, it is all the same,—the soul has the evidence of things not seen, and goes singing into her rest.

Now, then, a faith like this must be a prime thing in your life and mine, or we shall make a dead failure of it ; and it must be rooted in us, as it was in these old-time men, in a sure conviction of some divine intention to be wrought out by our living.

There is a trick of humility, in some men, I cannot believe to be good. It is that which makes them so very humble, that

they cannot try to do a thing worth the notice of earth or heaven. Believe me, that is not a possession, but a destitution. It is not because I have humility when I feel like that, but because I want faith. I can see nothing noble in myself, because I have not the evidence of things *not* seen. Well may any man be humble, in a fair, manly, and manful humility ; but, I tell you, the humility that will lead me to believe myself a nobody, a cipher, a stick, in this great destiny-laden world and time, is no better than a delusion and a snare. What I can do with my single arm may be mean enough ; but that is not the question. The thing to consider is, What can I do with God to help me ? And the difference of the one and the other way is just the difference between a man trying to push a train of cars up grade by his single, puny strength, and the same man on a locomotive, with the steam up, moving the whole mass by a turn of the wrist. The man at the rear of the train can do nothing : how should he ? But give him the lever, and the faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and all things are possible ; because then, in what his hand finds to do, there is hidden a treasure of power unspeakably greater than his own. The fire of an old world before Adam, the life-long energy and inspiration of Watt and Stephenson, the ponderous strokes of the Nasmyth hammer, and the labors of a thousand men, all lock into his hand the moment it touches that lever.

Now, then, we want to make sure of three things, then we shall know that this faith is our own : 1. That God is at work without me,—that is, the divine energy,—as fresh and full before I came, as the sea is before the minnow comes ; 2. That he is at work through me,—that is, the divine intention,—as certainly present in my life as it was in the life of Moses ; and, 3. That what we do together is as sure to be a success as that we are striving to make it one. They may be more in the graveyard than there is in the home. In the moment toward which I have striven forty years with a tireless, passionate, hungry energy, my expectation may be cut off, while my eye is as bright and my step as firm as ever. It is no matter. The energy is as full, the intention as direct, and the accomplishment as sure, as though God had already made the pile complete.

And when, with the conviction that I can do a worthy thing, and the courage to try and the constancy to keep on, I can cast myself, as Paul did, and Moses and Abraham, into the arms of a perfect assurance of this energy, intention, and accomplishment of the Eternal,—feel, in every fibre of my nature, that in Him I live and move and have my being,—I shall not fear, though the earth be removed, because—

“ A faith like this for ever doth impart  
Authentic tidings of invisible things ;  
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power,  
And central peace, subsisting at the heart  
Of endless agitation.”

Let the lad, in this spirit, dream of his great place, then, and strike for it with all his might ; and the man, in the thick of this world's work, take heart as these old Hebrews did, and be sure that to do what honest thing he has to do, with courage and constancy as long as he lives, is not only the way to heaven hereafter, but the way to make heaven a solid and shining reality now. Hume said the teaching of ethics in England improved the manufacture of broadcloth. I doubt not that the broadcloth re-acted again on the ethics, because all things work together for good to them that love God.

But one word waits now to be said. There, on the summit of all great doing, stands one whose life is the light of men ; because, beyond all men, there came into his heart this conviction, that he had a great destiny, and the courage to live for it, and the constancy to hold on to it, together with an assurance of the divine energy and intention and accomplishment, that carried him clean through.

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ; but it bore him through that. He esteemed himself stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted ; but it bore him through that. The great destiny he had believed in never seemed such an utter failure as when he was dying for it, and the men that had clung to him and believed in him—one with curses, and the rest with cowardice—forsook him, and fled ; but it carried him through that. He died in the ~~rose-bloom~~ rose-bloom of his life ; but it carried him through that,—

and so he became the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

O men, working for God's truth in this time! it is almost natural, when you see what appalling forces of evil you have to encounter, that you should say, "What can we do better than meet in this corner, keep a spark of fire burning in our own hearts, and let the rest go?" If that is all we can do, we cannot do that. There is no greater mistake than to suppose, that this divine fire, of faith in the heart, is to be kindled Indian-fashion by rubbing two dry sticks together in a meeting-house. I must have faith in my faith,—believe that, if my convictions in religion, in civil policy, in morals, and in life altogether, could go wide and deep, they would make new heavens and a new earth; and then go to work, and make them go wide and deep.

"Thou must be true thyself,  
If thou the truth wouldst teach;  
Thy soul must overflow, if thou  
Another soul wouldst reach,—  
It needs the overflowing heart  
To give the lips full speech.  
Think truly, and thy thought  
Shall the world's famine feed;  
Speak truly, and thy word  
Shall be a fruitful seed;  
Live truly, and thy life shall be  
A great and noble creed."

## VII.

## Hope.

I WANT to say a word about hope,—“the real riches,” David Hume said, “as fear is the real poverty ;” what Jeremy Collier calls “that vigorous principle, which sets the head and heart to work, animates the man to do his very utmost, puts difficulty out of countenance, and makes even impossibility give way ;” “the highest recognition of the pure intellect,” says another famous old author, “and the earnest of its immortality ;” “at the bottom of the vase,” the ancients said, “when every other thing had gone out of it,”—by which, no doubt, they meant the human heart.

And I can think of no better way of getting at the root of the matter, than to begin with the primitive root of the word itself, in the Anglo-Saxon. It is something that means to open the eyes wide, and watch for what is to come ; as we have all noticed children do, when they expect to see some wonder or receive some gift. Indeed, there is another word, closely akin to this, from which we get our hope,—the word *expect*, watching for what is to come, the obverse of inspect, looking at what has come. Another closely-related word, much more frequently used in human senses in England than in America, is *gape* ; especially descriptive of the way in which a young bird in the nest will get ready for food, at the slightest intimation that it may be coming. These roots, away back in the nursery of our tongue, perhaps all belong to the one tangle, though they are now growing as separate plants ; and they certify, clearly enough, how the seed out of which they first sprang is the instinct by which we are prompted, both for this life and that which is to come, to look out eagerly toward the infinite ; in the expectation, that there is in God and his good providence that which will be to us what the mother bird, poised on the spray or shooting like a flash to her place, is to the helpless fledgling in the nest.

And I want to ask, before I go further, what can be more beautiful than these kindred etymologies? A child on tiptoe with its eyes wide open, expecting, because an intimation has come, that presently there will be something to see or receive; the nestling in its cradle, waiting for its sure morsel. That was the way in which our first fathers tried to express their idea of what hope is, and what it can do. They said, "As a child opens its eyes, and a young bird its mouth, so is true hope in the soul of a man,"—expectation and intimation together, certainty reaching through change, the flutter of a fledgling's heart, welded fast to immutable law.

These meanings to me, again, are the delicate dividing line between Faith and Hope. They are twin sisters, and hardly to be known apart; both as beautiful as they can be, and alike beautiful, and very often indeed mistaken each for the other. Yet this need never be; because between them there is this clear difference, that while Hope expects, Faith inspects; while Hope is like Mary, looking *up*-ward, Faith is like Martha, looking *at*-ward; while the light in the eyes of Hope is high, the light in the eyes of Faith is strong; while Hope trembles in expectation, Faith is quiet in possession. Hope leaps out toward what will be: Faith holds on to what is; Hope idealizes, Faith realizes; Faith sees, Hope foresees.

And so it comes, that, in what we call religion, faith is conservative, while hope is progressive. And the most hopeful men are always drawn into the new movements of their age, and are faithful to them, so long as they can remember Goethe's exhortation, to be true to the dream of their youth, For progression is up stream, while conservatism is on stream. And so, if a man gets afraid, as Luther did, or tired with Erasmus, there is no need that he should get out of the boat, or pull back: all he need do is just leave go of the stroke-oar, and the thing will go back of itself fast enough. It is so that not a few who were progressive men at twenty-five are conservative men at fifty-five; yet are not aware that they have done a thing to make themselves conservative. It is so that some Unitarians are far less liberal than some Orthodox, who were once a long way behind them; not that they ever pulled back, but they did not



pull forward, while the Orthodox did. Now they are away down below ; and only do not go lower, because they have drifted into the still waters in which it is a matter of the most absolute indifference which way they may be heading. In their youth, their watchword was, "Be sure you are right, and then,—go ahead ;" in their age it is, "Be sure you are right, and then,—hold on." The trouble with such men is, that, while they hold on to the faith, they have let go of the hope of their religion. And so they inspect but they do not expect ; they believe in what has come, but not in what is coming. So they expire after they have ceased to inspire ; they die, but they do *not* make many live.

You get a grand lesson on this matter, as you go from the mouth to the springs of the Rhine. Passing through the fog and mist of Holland, as through a stagnant, grassy sea, you stretch upward, league after league ; and, as you go, the country gradually changes. The air grows clearer, the prospect finer ; every thing that can stir the soul begins to reach down toward you, and touch you with its glory. But the higher you go, the harder is your going ; only the deepening beauty never fails you. So at last you come into Switzerland, where the blue heavens bend over you with their infinite, tender light ; and the mountains stand about you, in their white robes, glorious as the gates of heaven, with green valleys nestling between, that, but for sorrow and sin, are beautiful as Paradise. And all about you is a vaster vision, and within you an intenser inspiration than can ever be felt on the foggy flats below.

It is *the* difference between faith alone, and faith and hope together. A man may be afloat on this river of the water of life, down on the stagnant flats of Romanism ; or he may pull up to the outposts of the mountains, and looking up and down, may say, "That is enough for me ; now I will go no further." Or he may look up, and see still, blue, misty distances, hinting of a glory his eye has not seen or his heart conceived ; and then go on again, full of hope, until the uttermost glory receives him into his heart. I do not claim this great place, *for my ism* or any other. When the thing is done, it is

generally done by a man who has broken away from the *isms*; some uplooking, steady, hopeful soul, that,—

“ Rowing hard against the stream,  
Sees distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And doth not dream it is a dream.”

For it must be true, as God is true, that the uttermost is the holiest truth; and, not until a man shall win his way to the very steps of the great white throne, can he at his peril inspect and cease to expect,—be content with possession, and not discontent with desire,—have such an absolute faith in any revelation, as to have no hope of a higher and better.

This brings me, then, to the consideration of hope itself as a positive matter. And in discussing this, I cannot do better than begin with the figure the apostle has caught, and ask you to notice the striking contrast it presents to many of our common ideas of what hope is, and what can it do.

Hope, you say. Why that is the most intangible thing a man can entertain. It is the mere poetry of life,—the play of summer lightning on the night, the meteor shower across heaven, the sheen of the aurora in winter. “Hope,” says Owen Feltham, “is the bladder a man will take wherewith to learn to swim; then he goes beyond return, and is lost.” And Lee,—

“ Hope is the fawning traitor of the mind,  
Which, while it cozens with a coloured friendship,  
Robs us of our best virtue,—resolution.”

Now, what says Paul? He has a picture in his eye of a Roman soldier, with bronze shoes, brazen greaves, breastplate, sword, shield; a quick eye, strong hand, steady foot, and a legion shoulder to shoulder, as cool in the thick of the battle as if it was on dress-parade. But that is because there is one thing more, wanting, which the man's hand and foot and eye and sword and shield would all come short of his need, when he has to hold his own against the battle-axe of the barbarian,—and that is the solid, shining helmet. So the apostle makes our life a battle, and every man a soldier, and it is not enough that the heart be protected by the shield of faith,—the head must be guarded also by the helmet of hope: the one is as indispensable as the other.

And a brief glance at the life about us will soon convince you that the man is right. Whether we dip into our own experience, or watch that of other men, we shall still conclude, with wise old Samuel Johnson, that our powers owe very much of their energy to our hope; and whatever enlarges hope exalts courage; and, where there is no hope, there is no endeavor.

Here is Cyrus Field conceiving the idea of binding the Atlantic with a cord,—of making that awful crystal dome a whispering gallery between two worlds,—of fulfilling afresh, in these last times, the old prophecy, that “as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” In carrying out his idea, the man has two servants to help him,—the faith that it can be done, and the hope that he shall do it. With these aids he goes to work. Faith steadies him; hope inspires him. Faith works; hope flies. Faith deliberates; hope anticipates. Faith lets the cable go, and it breaks, and is lost. “Nay, not lost,” cries hope, and fishes it up again. If hope had struck work in Cyrus Field, and faith alone had remained, we should not this day have had this *nexus* formed of his manhood, by which the world will be born again to a new life. But there, through the long day, the noble sisters stood,—faith in Ireland, hope in Newfoundland; faith in the Old World, hope in the New. Faith threw the cord, hope caught it. And “I saw a great angel stand with one foot on the sea, and another on the land; and he swore by Him that liveth, that *time shall be no more.*”

Here is Garibaldi conceiving the idea of a new Italy. He has faith and hope. Austria, Naples, and Rome are against him. But no man knows, or can know, what faith and hope together can do in a man of the pattern of Garibaldi. What they have done for Italy will go ringing down the ages. They have “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, escaped the edge of the sword, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women have received their dead to life again; others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain the better resurrection.” And in these very days they are singing a song,

as we sang, "John Brown's body" and the "Battle-cry of Freedom;" and its burden is their hope that Italy will be free. And if that man shall still keep his hands clasped in the hands of these sisters, this good work will never cease, until Italy shall rise clean out of the dust, and the old mistress of the world begin a new career; in which her greatness will be counted, as all true greatness is counted, by the worth and weight of the service she can render to the race.

Very curiously, if you will again, you can see the power of faith without hope illustrated in China. There you see a nation, beside which in numbers we are only a handful, that has had for ages as much faith and as little hope as ever entered into any civilization. When our ancestors were savages, they had advanced about where they are now. Things we consider the morning stars of our new life were known to them centuries before we invented them? And who shall say what China might not have been to-day, had she marched on under the banner of a boundless hope? But she had faith without hope. She said, "My learning, literature, science, art, religion are all as good as they can be. If any man shall add unto these things, I will add unto him plagues; and, if any man shall take away from these things, I will take away his part out of the book of life." It is in vain that Raphael has painted, and Angelo builded; and that holy men, from of old, have written as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. What is St. Peter's to the great Pagoda, or the Immaculate Conception to the gilded Joss, or the Evangels to Confucius, or the Monitor to the royal Junk, or any other thing we can show, to the glory of the children of the Sun? So the vast empire sits still on the stagnant waters of conservatism, with faith, without hope; inspecting for ever, expecting no more, and with Russia creeping stealthily toward a point where she can get a fair sight at her heart. Then some day, there will be a shot, and a great dead carcass, to which the Lion of England will gather with the Northern Bear; and on which the Eagle of America will swoop down swiftly, screaming defiance as she flies at the Eagle of France. But who shall say, that China, with the noble qualities no doubt she has, might not have had a peerless place in the world, had she held herself

hopeful and expectant, continually, toward every new idea and discovery,—had she taken for a helmet the hope of salvation?

And, altogether, this fact of hope and its influence has some important applications. First, in the application of hope to religion, to the deepest and highest things of which we have any knowledge, it is entirely essential to remember, that, when this man tells his friends to take for a helmet the hope of salvation, he meant the hope he himself was rushing through the world to proclaim, with such an abandon of enthusiasm, as to make a cool, dispassionate Roman call him a lunatic.

So that the first thing really in the exhortation is the hopefulness of the exhorter. The man had, for that old time, just what Cyrus Field had on the Stock Exchange in London,—the splendid contagion of a great hope, as reasonable to him as the coldest mathematical demonstration, while yet it might seem to the mathematician a mere mild dream. And this is always the first thing, the greater thing than faith,—the power that sings what faith can only say, the perfect music to the noble word.

In the England of John Wesley, numbers of men were his peers in faith. Butler, Toplady, Romaine, John Newton, and a whole host beside, got as firm a grip on what faith can reach, and said words as noble for it as he did. But Wesley had more *hopefulness* in his little finger than any other man of them had in his whole body, not excepting even Whitefield, who was always hampered by the chills and fever of Calvinism. Wesley was the liberal Christian apostle of his day, and his Methodism the liberal Christianity. His successors, however, have long since ceased to pull up stream. But so it was, that, wherever Wesley went, men caught the contagion of his great hope, and then ran tirelessly as long as they lived, kindling over all the world. And so Macaulay does well to say, that no man can write a history of England in the last century, who shall fail to take into account Wesley's vast influence in the common English life.

This was what Paul had to begin with. How did he get it?

We are watching, just now in this country, the solution of a very weighty problem. It is this: How nearly can the tree of knowledge overshadow and overgrow the tree of life in our

children, and we still endure to see it, without a revolution? We take them in their tender age, make them do an amount of head-work before they are through the high school, to say nothing of college, most of us revolt from in our prime. They grow thin and pale in the process, lose vitality—and what there is no better word for than *vim*—every year; and so, at last, they graduate, with a fine stock of knowledge, and an utter loathing of it in many cases; that is, half inanition and half intellectual dyspepsia.

In a deep, spiritual sense, this was what the world had come to in religion in Paul's time, and what Paul had come to when the great hope struck him on his way to Damascus. As a Jew, he had run after all the signs, miracles, and dogmas of his church; as a scholar, had dipped away down into what was known then of the nature and philosophy of things; and, alike as Pharisee and philosopher, he had been in awful and appalling earnest, only to find that somehow his heart was dead to all the good of it. It was then that the new hope had caught him, given him a new life, and made him seem like a crazy man to the Roman as he went telling of the wonder. But as the chemist can keep you a piece of ice in a white-hot crucible, so in St. Paul's nature there was a place cooler than any thing the Roman suspected, where the worth of the new hope was calmly proven right along, and always with the same result,—that, wherever it took full possession, it opened the soul afresh to earth and heaven, started all sorts of new energies and activities, and, being a new life, made a new man.

Then, in life generally, as in religion particularly, this hope is essential. "Those sciences are always studied with the keenest interest," says Sir William Hamilton, "that are in a state of progress and uncertainty. Absolute certainty and completion would be the paralysis of any study; and the last and worst calamity that could befall man, as he is now constituted, would be the full and final possession of speculative truth he now vainly anticipates as the consummation of his happiness." And so it is always true, that the restless radicals in speculative theology, in any age, instead of being infidels, are saviours, because they bring in a new hope, and break in on the appalling

dogma of a finality, with the news that yonder, away in the distance is the intimation of a new world better and more beautiful than this the time lives in; and then, while a timid conservatism is creeping out it is impossible as did the conservatism of old Spain, they put out up stream, like Columbus, and find it.

I take no credit to the liberal faith we have no right to claim, when I say what I believe, that posterity will do us justice for endeavoring to save even the Bible from contempt in the mind of this age,—first, by showing a better truth in it than was allowed to exist in the dogmas of the churches; and, second, by affirming that there is an infinite truth over and above the Bible, into which all men are welcome to penetrate who will or can,—so opening the vista of a blessed and boundless hope to the always unsatisfied mind and soul.

Then I must make this general hope my own particular possession. Our time, and all time, abounds in those who have a great faith, but not a great hope; the solid certainty about the heart, but not the shining assurance about the intellect. God will make all right somehow, they feel; but tell them that he will do far more exceeding abundantly above all that they can ask or *think*, and that will strike them as something they never adequately realized, always providing they believe you. Yet it is this alone that lifts us out of the world of inspection into that of expectation; that flashes into the soul the vision of that shy, trembling, blue, misty distance, on the far horizon of the world of grace and truth; hinting rather than revealing its beauty, but bringing untold treasure of rich experiences by the way, as we pull up stream to seek it,—experiences we had never suspected, staying down among the flats.

Friends, I would not like to think of heaven as in any sense a finality. If, when old Bunyan's Christian went in at those golden gates, he gave up a great hope for a great possession,—then, knowing what I do, and only what I do, I pity him.

Young men and women, with this life mainly before you, *get this hope*. I have had twenty years more of life than

you have ; and, if I could tell you some of it that can only be known where no secrets are hid, you would acknowledge it was as hard for me as it ever can be for you. I call back to you from my vantage-ground of twenty years, and beseech you to bring, with a great faith, a great hope ; to make sure, that there is not a day you can live, bending over your work, with a sad sense perhaps that the life is going out of you in the merest necessity of living, but brings you nearer to some divine surprise of blessing, some great unfolding of God's very glory.

Men and women in middle life, as I am ; with the bloom gone from some things that seemed very beautiful, as they lay glistening in the dew of the morning ; with ashes for beauty, yonder in the cemetery ; and with a dumb, daily care about things that must be cared for ; with children growing up, for whose future you plan and pray ; with a faith still in the things from which the bloom has gone, and that God, who has given you ashes for beauty, will some time give you beauty for ashes ; that things will come right generally at last, and that the children will some time scramble into the right place as you did,—I charge you, as one to whom God has entrusted the keys,—the sense and faculty of realizing that his dark ways open,—to take for your helmet the hope of salvation. Whatever you do, never let a painful inspection rob you of a great expectation. If, as you live, you try to live faithfully, then, as the Lord liveth, try to live hopefully, or you will miss the better half of your living. Do you go to your graves these winter days, and observe how the flowers, you tended there last summer are dead, and think of other and fairer dead, of which those were but the poor intimation. For the sake of all that can fill you with the everlasting life, open your heart to the sense of that spring-tide, sure to rise, when the sun comes back ; and tell your soul, that is but the intimation also of the spring-tide poor David Gray sang about, as he lay a-dying, in the first bloom of his life,—

“ There is life with God  
In other kingdoms of a sweeter air :  
In Eden every flower is blown. Amen.”



So may all sing, if to an inreaching faith they will add an outlooking hope,—will know that this flutter of the heart, that causes them to open their eyes wide, reaches for its fruition into certainties immutable as heaven.

## VIII.

## Love.

1 COR. xiii. 13: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

It was my lot lately to speak to you about two prime things in our life,—Faith and Hope. One other thing still remains to be considered,—Love; in Paul's estimation, the essence of all professions and possessions in religion whatever. I want to speak to you of this greatest thing now; to try and tell you what it is, what it can do, and so what we are, if we possess it; and, by consequence, what we are not if we do not possess it, though we may have every thing beside that earth and heaven can give. In the text, the word is translated charity. It is a term that touches, at the best, only one little corner of love. In Wickliffe's time, however, from whose Bible this translation was adopted into our version, love and charity were as nearly related as charity and benevolence are now. This can be understood, if we will remember that charity and dear, in the sense of precious, belong to the one root. They spring from what was common enough when they were born,—dearth or scarcity. Food was then precious, much esteemed, much loved. The generation to which my grandfather belonged had some such idea as this. They lived through a time when a succession of bad seasons, and a wasteful war, had reduced the whole working population of England to miserable black bread. Then good bread, sound and white, was dear; not as it is now to us in money value merely, but in this primitive value of something to love, a small piece being given to the children sometimes on a Sunday, as a very precious thing.

In that way, we get at the old meaning of this word charity

Five hundred years ago, it was so understood generally, as to warrant its adoption by Wickliffe in preference to love. In that sense, Milton still uses it, three hundred years after, in "Paradise Lost," in the lines,—

"Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem  
Man's mortal crime?  
Dwells in all heaven a *charity* so dear?"

And Dr. Samuel Clarke still later says, "Charity doth not merely signify, as we use it now, almsgiving to the poor; but universal love and goodwill to all men." The word must have gone out of use as expressing love, however, at a very early day,—perhaps about the time when people ceased to put any love into their charity, making it merely a duty; for, a century only after Wickliffe, Coverdale renders the word as we have it, Cranmer follows Coverdale, and the Geneva Bible both. And I have dwelt this moment on the matter,—first, that you might see how it stands; and, second, that you may see something else that is not without importance, so long as we prefer the Bible in our worship before all other books.

A few Sundays ago, I read the lesson for the morning, a part of the Sermon on the Mount, from the translation of Andrews Norton, no doubt one of the best in existence; and, wherever it differs from the one we use, generally, the nearest right. I heard a number of comments afterward on the change. I did not hear one say it was for the better: everybody, on the whole, preferred the old version. So in my heart I do. I have read it ever since I read any thing, and my fathers before me for many generations. Our mothers read it as the sleeping babes nestled beside them; and, when the babes were old men of fourscore, and dying, the minister read it to the departing soul, and over the dust by the grave. And so no wonder it is in our hearts. But what about the head? We owe something to that. When the German peasant said to the priest, "I cannot repeat the Lord's Prayer, but I can give you the tune," he did precisely what we (who would have laughed at him) do every time that we prefer the sound to the sense,—the old familiar words, now only partly true, to the truth and life of Norton and Noyes. I think,

if the term "villain" had been so fortunate as to be the best translation, at the time our version was made, of the word "servant," as it was in the elder English, and then the old sense had left it as it has, there would be great numbers of worshippers of the common version, quite ready to show what a sound, well-flavoured word it is, especially if they were not servants. The truth is, the best equivalent for either Greek or Hebrew is always the English that can give me the keenest edge or the finest aroma of the original for which it stands; and, that word being the truest, is therefore the most sacred. So that not this, because it is old, or that, because it is new, but that which, with the letter, can transfer to me the spirit of the original, is the most sacred book.

This said, the question comes up for our consideration, What is this love, of which Paul makes such marvellous account? In the chapter in which my text occurs, he conducts one of the most striking arguments, by affirmation, ever made, to show what a supreme thing it is. He supposes himself possessing the finest qualities, excepting this one, that can be imagined. An eloquence so noble as to combine manly breadth with angelic insight,—I may have that, he says. Then he takes a brazen instrument and blows through it one of those discordances we have all heard from the thing, and says, If I have not love, my eloquence is that. Or I may be able to dive, by my intuitions, into the very heart of things (with Shakspeare, he would have said, if he were writing the Epistle now), or may hold in my brain the whole encyclopedia of human knowledge, and the result may be a power that can lift mountains out of their sockets; but, if I have not love, what I have and what I am is nothing. Nay, with all this I may combine a charity so boundless, as to leave me at last as poor as the poverty I have stripped myself to relieve; and a devotion so absolute, that I will be burnt at the stake. But eloquence, intuition, knowledge, faith, benevolence, and devotion, all together, are merely so many ciphers, if I have not love.

Now, is this wonderful governing quality capable of being made simple and clear, like faith and hope, so that I may

know inevitably whether I possess it?—must be a great question, if Paul is right, as no doubt he is. What, then, is this love? It is a word traceable altogether to many different roots. That could not be otherwise; because, in every rivulet that now makes this river of the English tongue, it must have been present in one form or other. Love would naturally be one of the very first things the most abject savages must find a name for, after getting a word to express each of the bare needs of life. The first time the man of the forest tried to win a maiden in some higher way than by the ancient contrivance of carrying her off by force, he would need the word. The first time the mother had to tell of the mysterious glow in her heart toward her babe in its helplessness, she would need the word. And so love, in one root, is longing; in another, goodness; in another, preference; but, to me, the right rests at last with Adam Clarke's idea, that it is the Teutonic word *leben*,—life. "This is *life*," these children of nature said, when they first began to be conscious of this glowing wonder in their hearts. "You are my life" the man said when he went to win the maiden; and the mother, when she caught her nursing to her heart. Love is to live; and not to love is not to live. And it was exactly the definition that John hit on away off across the world, when he wanted to tell of the nearest and dearest of all the relations the soul can hold to God.

And so, if you will recall what was said about faith,—that it is inreaching; and hope, that it is outlooking,—we come then to what we are to understand of love,—that it is *in being*. By faith I stand; by hope I soar; by love I am. Faith assures me, hope inspires me; love is me, at my best. "Love," says an old French lexicon, "is the sameness of souls."—"Love," says Luther, "is that by which I desire to be in perpetual union with that I love."—"Love," says Dr. South, "is the spirit and spring of the universe."—"Love," says Emerson, "is our highest word and synonym of God"—"And love," says Solomon, "is strong as death." But, the instant we read that, we say Solomon does not reach the mark in his definition, any more than he did in his life; for, in

the history of humanity, millions of proofs have been given that love is stronger than death, and is, as Erasmus says, "as immortal, when it is rooted in virtue, as virtue herself."

And it is only as we keep close to this idea and fact,—of love as life,—that we can prevent its being confounded with other and baser things, that, getting mixed up with it in our own language, act like the baser metals mixed up in the coinage of a country, giving the real gold and silver a lower relative value, and debasing the whole fair standard of commonwealth. Love, for example, is not lust. Because love, for whatever may in itself be good, adds just so much as there is in what I love to life ; while lust for that very thing exhausts life. Here are two men devoted to money-making. In the one, money is love ; in the other, a lust. In the heart in which it is a love, it acts like a fire, expanding and softening ; in the heart in which it is a lust, it acts like a frost, hardening and contracting. In Peabody and Peter Cooper,—and I wish to heaven I could put some noble Chicago man into the catalogue,—in men like these it is a love. Their hearts grow with their growing fortunes. They are solid men ; they do solid things,—found great libraries and institutes, inaugurate noble movements for model dwellings for the poor, while, at the same time, they are sustaining vast commercial interests, that make the difference between Glasgow and Cork.

But, in numbers we have all known or heard of, the love of money as a lust, and acts like a frost, hardening, contracting, and finally killing every large idea and generous impulse in their souls. They will say the money is my own, to do as I like. It is only their own, as if they owned a glacier that was for ever accumulating over them, and lived at the bottom of one of its chasms. Their money is their own, as that ice would be their own,—it is their shroud and coffin and grave. When we say money is the root of all evil, we mean lust of money. So long as you can be sure that the fortune you are making is "expanding with the expanding soul," you may be sure that it is only good, and that continually ; because it is so much added to your life, now and for ever. The love of money to the lust of money is as the preparation for heaven and hell.

This is still more clearly true, when we touch another thing, about which we never think of speaking as the love of this or that, even though we put such an affix to the love of God ; but consider it enough just to say the word, and it tells the whole tale. The most primitive idea of the relation of the man and woman in our Bible is not at all what we make it now,—that the man is the volume and the woman the supplement. It is rather that the man is the first volume, good enough as far as it goes ; but, if there is to be no second, more aggravating than if there was'nt any,—a story half told and then broken off just as we began to get interested, demanding not a supplement but a complement, to make it complete. So the thing stands in the first Hebrew dawn of time. The man is as good as the Lord can make him ; but *then* there is nothing for even the divine Worker to do but put him to sleep until he makes a woman. And the first thing he tells him about her, as he bids them join their hands, is, that she shall stand to him in the line of that love which is life,—shall not be somebody else, but his own intimate self, as he hers ; soul blending with soul, and becoming one, as two drops of dew become one in the heart of a flower-cup. It is so for ever with all true love.

When the young man, living in a room, eating in a restaurant, and troubled about more things than ever Martha was, feels at last how contracted and poor such a life is at the best, and says in his heart, "This is not living : I must get me a wife,"—whatever may be his idea of the wife he wants, the word he uses to describe his condition reaches away into the truth. It is not living : it is just half living, and probably not that. His heart is crying out for the rest of his life.

Or when the maiden teaching school, working in the store, helping to keep house at home, doing whatever a maiden may do, thinks of a question that might be asked and an answer that might be given, if all was right that seems most wrong,—she is dreaming of another life, in which a double care and sorrow and pain is only another name for a deeper color, a more exquisite texture, and a double warp and woof running through the whole web of her future existence. That is the love which is life,—the love whereby the two becoming one doubles the intrinsic value of each for ever.

But there is that calling itself love which is lust,—something that seeks not a life, but an appanage to life, and reaps for its sowing a harvest of gray ashes. Love informs life ; lust exhausts it. Love is the shining sun, lust is the wandering star. When I remember some sights I have seen,—how men and women have mistaken lust for love, and then, when they had found out their mistake, have gone on dragging their chain, biting it, and growing ever more bitter the longer they live,—I have wanted to lift up my voice like a trumpet, to show men and women this distinction, so that it shall be for ever unmistakable ; and to cry to young men and maidens, especially, that hear me, “ How can ye escape, if ye neglect so great salvation ! ”

But, beside such special applications, there is no direction in which we can turn but this spirit meets us with its sweet, solemn face, demanding to be put in the van of our endeavor, or there can be no wonder and glory of success. Consider the lesson we have learned in our war. When we plunged into that red sea, the gentlemen of England were looking on. They stated frankly their opinions,—a few on one side ; a multitude on the other. The few said we should hold our own : they were sure of it,—John Bright, Thomas Hughes, John Forster, of Bradford, and all the men after their heart. The great multitude which no man can number said we had gone under. The “ Times ” thundered—the “ Saturday Review ” sneered, and M.P.’s made conclusive addresses to the Honorable House on the failure of democratic institutions. What made this difference among men of about equal opportunity ? I will tell you. John Bright, Thomas Hughes, John Forster, and all that stood in their company, loved us with a love that made their hearts throb and their souls sing ; so that Faith stood square, and Hope plumed her wings, and they became the glad ministers of their leader and guide. And what made other men, whose names I will not celebrate by this momentary mention, sure it was all over ? It is the weakest word I can find, when I say they did not love us. They had no faith in us and no hope for us, because they had no love ; “ for now remaineth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these is love.” It is entirely possible, that, in the beginning, they might not

differ very much in their conclusions ; but as somewhere on this continent the water parts on the two sides of a barn,—this way to sunshine and freedom ; that to the fetters of frost,—so the two orders of men were positive and negative. And as the days went on the love was life, but the want of it death.



When a man really loves a land and a cause, it piles great stores of life into his heart ; so that he may even come to some dreadful pass where faith and hope fail him, and yet love shall carry him through. One morning, when I was in Europe, I had two things present themselves to be done. It was in Lucerne. Louis Napoleon had come the night before with the empress. They could be seen ; or there was an old bridge to be seen, on which the good city had painted some of the most notable things in her history. I neglected the emperor, but I saw the bridge and here is one of the stories it had to tell. Hundreds of years ago, that Austria, now shorn of the strength she so prostituted, went into Switzerland to devour *her* bit of freedom,—burnt the harvests, besieged the cities, and prepared to crush out the band that armed to oppose her. There was little room for faith or hope in such a contest ; but then all the more room for an utterly limitless love. You know the story. The enemy advanced, a solid wall of steel, and began to creep round the little band. Switzer after Switzer fell trying to break in and turn the tide of battle. There might be hope only if the wall was broken, and the peasants could come within the line. Then, in the last dreadful moment, one went rushing, for love of Switzerland, on the solid ranks of the spears, broke the close array, by gathering them into his own breast,—that is what they show you painted on the panels of the old bridge at Lucerne, and I have never regretted going to fill my heart afresh with it, instead of going to see the Emperor : it was the chance of getting a look at a mortal or an immortal. I went to see the immortal,—to see the shrine of the man who had the love which is life so strong in his heart, that his life itself is still in its prime, after almost five hundred years.

And this is the truth about our life, in whatever way we test it. The love which is life alone can make life all it must be,



whatever we may be and do beside. When the father wants to put his son on the way to success, if he is a wise man, he most anxiously tries to find out where the lad's love lies ; for there, he knows, he will have faith and hope, because the love will be a perpetual inspiration and motive, a perpetual life, to duty and accomplishment ; while, to put him to what he can never love, will only exhaust and disgust him, until at last it is given up in despair. Not that the boy and man is not faithful and dutiful, but just because he could not make up his mind to die out by a constant drain on all the power and vitality there was in him, when there is still a hope that he can do that which will be like a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Nay, so true this is, that if one lad with love in his heart fails to do the thing he loves, while another with what he thinks is love, but which is only lust, of fame or fortune, shall in a measure succeed,—the loving heart shall still be fullest of the life of the endeavor. Hazlitt, as a painter, had this love: Haydon had lust. Hazlitt never succeeded in painting a picture, after all his endeavors ; but he did succeed in loving his art so, that its power and life lifted his soul into the finest insight and appreciation of pictures possessed by any man in his time : while poor Haydon, perpetually lusting for applause, and to be the founder of a great school, and to be honored and worshipped, went on in an ever more desperate and deadly exhaustion, down to his death.

So I would love to linger in these regions of the common life, if there was time, and open more fully to you this almost endless application of love as life. But there is one great application remaining,—this that Paul makes, which is but another way of saying this that the Almighty makes ; for the words of men that speak as they are moved by the Spirit do not create the thing : they simply reveal it.

And the task is the more easy, because these things, I have tried to make clear are most intimately one with this that remains ; so that you do not turn away from these to come to  but just work on, facing in the one direction, getting  and nearer to your study, to find in the very centre of

it this that the apostle fills so full of all that is greatest and best. For, no doubt, when the distinction is drawn in which a man is made as eloquent as men and angels together, and wise as all the seers, and accomplished as all the scholars, and benevolent to the last mite in his possession, and devoted as the martyr at the stake, yet it is deemed to be nothing if he have not love, it is the line between love and lust that is drawn; between doing a thing in order to get to heaven, and doing a thing because we are already heavenly; between being religious for what may come of it, and expressing what has come, as naturally as a child expresses its joy by laughter.

It is charged to our faith, sometimes, that it is indifferent about a change of heart. Let a man do the works, it is said (we say), and then he is sure to be right. It may be sometimes true: it is as possible for us to fall into a cold morality as any other order of religious believers. It is a very great mistake, however, to suppose that, because we are not eternally opening the doors and poking the fire, we are therefore indifferent as to whether it is burning. We can no more believe that a man can live this life, which is love, and do its work for God and man, and make a grand success of it, by doing good or handsome or charitable or religious things, or expecting that they will somehow at last work their way into the heart, and make all right,—than we can believe that a locomotive can be started right, filled full of power, and sent on its way, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race, by kindling a fire about it instead of *in the firebox*. It is for ever indispensable, and for every body, that they have a change of heart, if they need one. If in the soul there is no glow and expansion,—no such feeling in the heart as that which you may understand easily, any time, you will watch a mother in the midst of her little brood of children,—then there must be such a glow and expansion, or all there is beside is sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. “He that loveth not, knoweth not God.” It is the old, sweet, single word, without the affix, as when we speak of the love of the man and maiden. “He that loveth not, knoweth not God.” The very love of God is only one of the loves in our loving. It is not the object but

the life of which I am to make sure ; and then, as Richter says, "the heart in this heaven, like the wandering sun, sees nothing, from a dew-drop to an ocean, but a mirror it warms and fills." "So loving was St. Francis," says Ruskin, "that he claimed a brotherhood with the wolf."—"So loving was St. Francis," says another, "that he remembered those that God had seemingly forgotten." It is this love, and this alone, that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth."

But do you say, "Oh ! tell me how to get this love ?" I tell you, you have the first white spark of it. If you really love at all, if you love a dog, you have that in your heart which may grow to be as mighty as the love of the first archangel. If I can love that I do love with the love which is life,—with a true heart fervently,—as I open my heart to this grace and goodness of loving, the breath of heaven will draw through and fan the flame, kindling this way and that, until the whole soul is on fire with a love that warms and energizes whatever it touches, like the pure sun. It is a divine life, but its kindling is in a human love. Who has not pondered that wonderful history ? One goes to a wedding. Only his mother knows much about him ; it is possible he knows but little about himself. He sits apart from the merry-making : there is not much there that he cares for ; but at last there is one thing,—the bridegroom, an old friend probably, is about to be ashamed and humiliated to the whole country-side. He saves him from that shame and humiliation. I care not a pin about whether it was water or wine they had ; but here, at the opening of a gospel, is the story of one who, for "auld lang syne," will not let his friend hang his head ashamed. It is the first spark to be detected of the greatest fire that ever burned in a soul. Once started it caught,—here a cripple, there a blind man ; here a widow, weeping by the bier of her only son ; there a madman wandering among the graves : leaping from one to another, growing white and full, deep and intense, with what it fed on, until it burnt through the very asbestos of the grave, and made uncounted millions of hearts burn with the power of an endless life. It was a love which is life that kindled the flame ; and it was what we may

all realize in some good measure, if we will. Then we may be able to say no word to which the world will listen ; may have no faculty, possess no knowledge ; be as poor as the widow with her two mites, which made one farthing ; and believe that we do not believe any thing. But, because we *love* with the love which is life, we shall have the eloquence which surpasses speech, and the intuition that dives below the faculty of the seers ; the knowledge before which the lamp of knowledge pales, as a taper before the sun ; the gold which is good, and the devotion that is better than burning,—the devotion of loving. Heaven will then be in the soul : we shall not *seek* it : we shall *carry* it. For as “now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face ; and as now we know in part, but then we shall know as we are known,” so “now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these is *Love*.”

## IX.

## Ascending and Descending Angels.

JOHN i. 51 : “The angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

THAT is, the angels come from below the Son of man, as well as from above him ; yet they are the angels of God, from whatever quarter they come. And as in space the heavens are all about us,—not above only, but below ; so in the soul the heavens unfold the son of man every way, and below him, as above him, open to his angels.

The term “son of man,” in the broad sense, has no mystical meaning. It reaches clean through the scale of life, from the son of man a reptile in the Book of Job, and the son of man as grass in the Book of Isaiah, to the Son of man Lord of the Sabbath, the Son of man, with power on earth to forgive sins, and the Son of man glorified of the Gospels. So it is at once the general title for any child of humanity, and the one name Jesus Christ always claims for himself. “The Son of man,” therefore, is not only the loftiest, but the lowest man. From the reptile to the Redeemer, it embraces every one.

But, broad as this term is, it is not broader than this of the angels that come from the open heavens everywhere into his life ; meaning, in the simplest sense, that which is actively at work ; and, in the sacred sense, that which is doing God's will. For there is no trace anywhere of an indolent angel. You follow the term carefully as it is used by these Bible men, and find that it is by no means confined to what we understand by "angels" commonly ; but they seem to believe, with one of their own rabbins, that "all divine operations, whether natural or spiritual, are done by angels. Jacob's ladder is everywhere stretching from earth to heaven, and every grass-blade has its own angel to attend it."

And so you will find, that, excepting the angel is never feminine, there is almost infinite diversity of angelhood. They are gods, and sons of God, and men ; the spirit of the thunder and wind and fire ; the spirit of nations, kings, statesmen, and pastors. Time would fail me to tell of their almost endless diversity,—from the angel standing at the gate of Eden, whose sword flamed every way before the paradise lost, to the angel with the golden reed, who measures the city in the paradise regained. The Bible conception of the angel touches, on one side, the spirits that stand nearest the immanent glory ; and, on the other, that mystery of life in which—

"Every clod feels a stir of might,  
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,  
And, feeling blindly toward the light,  
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers."

And I have made this brief study of the Bible senses of the "son of man" and the "angels," because I suppose you have hardly imagined what a breadth and scope these terms take ; and also because, in this inclusiveness, we can find applications of my text it is hopeless to seek in the common conception of what it means. Read it in the light of the commentaries usually written about angels, and you say at once, "Here is something that relates entirely to the Messiah. It is a part of that whole system of things that makes him ~~the~~ the exception than the instance of humanity. These

angels were to minister, and did minister, to him, because he was Messiah, not because he was man; and so we have no part or lot in the matter, except to study the curious records of their nature and agency, contained in the far-away hints of Gospel and Epistle. We live now in a prosy railroad world, in which the telegraph can outstrip in swiftness the swiftest flying angel of the old ages; and angels, for many a century now, have fled from the earth." This is all easily said, and men are saying it on all sides of us. But it is not true that the angels never come: the trouble is, we do not look for them where they are. We look for them to sweep down through the opening heavens when they have come down already, and are hidden in the bluebells at our feet. We want them to appear like the great angels of Angelo: they are looking at us out of the dreamy wandering eyes of the babe born yesterday. We read of the angel that came and fought for Israel in the old days. He came and fought for us in these new days, not on wings, but on strong tramping feet; black, but comely; standing side by side with our brothers and sons. He strikes the rock in the wilderness now with a drill, and bores Artesian wells, and ministers to hunger and agony through a woman's hands and heart, and a surgeon's skill, and all common human agencies. Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to minister? But—

"I think we do as little children do,  
Who lean their faces on the window pane,  
To sigh the glass dim with their own breath-stain,  
And shut the sky and landscape from their view."

This indicates, then, the direction of my thought. It is not to teach you some strange doctrine, but to insist that you stand true to an old doctrine. I want not to bar out of any life the loftiest ministry of angelhood, but to insist also on your recognition of the lowest; and that these come to us also. Do you say that Moses and Elias came and talked with Jesus? Admitted. But the children he took in his arms were angels too, whose ministry was as indispensable to his tried and lonely life as that of the ascended prophets. And Martha troubled about his dinner, and Mary

washing his feet with her tears,—these were angels as truly as those that found him wandering in the wilderness, and fainting in the garden.

Small matters, you say, to that high soul,—a batch of children, a woman in a tiff, and a woman in tears; surely you are lowering the standard under which the angels muster, when you make these angels. We can think how these others might sweep down through the blue to his side, to minister unto him. But women and children, so far below him,—how can they be angels? These ascended, as those descended upon the Son of man. Indeed, it is wonderful to notice what a great part these angels that ascend play in the development of the life and truth as it is in Jesus; or it would be wonderful, if we did not see all about us now, how clear it is, that, when a life has trued itself to divine standards fairly, then whatever comes to it is somehow transmuted into fine gold for its service. To me, the shadow in the life of Jesus is only less inestimable than the light; the most adverse things seem to be as indispensable as the most felicitous. His homelessness, his loneliness, his hindrances, his sufferings,—all come trooping from below, hard, black, forbidding in the distance; but, when they light on him, they are angels. We love him more because he had not where to lay his head, than if he had been lodged in the palace of the Herods. We could never have had some of the most priceless things in the Gospels, but for the fierce bigotry of Scribe and Pharisee, vexing his righteous soul. The very Prodigal is made a minister to the most pregnant illustration in the Gospels of God's great mercy; while the lost woman stands for the most touching instance of his own great humanity. Nay, the heartless priest and Levite cannot escape the mighty transmutation; and the darkest, saddest, most deplorable event in time,—his agony and cruel death,—is the most significant, the very central circumstance, in the history of man. Now, these things, and all things like them, as they come up about the Son of man, are compelled into a divine service. Whatever the thing may be, it is no matter: when once it touches him, it becomes an angel.

From the lowest to the highest, from above and from below, their nature always waits to be revealed in the nature of the man to whom they come.

Right here, however, the question meets us, What son of man now has any right to expect such a ministry of angels in his life, as this that was identified with the life of the Saviour? We cannot hope for it, because we can bear no such responsibility on the one hand, and can claim no such worthiness on the other. There is but one answer to this objection. It is, that not what we may be worth to ourselves or the world, but what we are worth to God, being the prime reason why the angels come at all, we cannot be sure that there is no such ministry except we were sure there is no such worth. It would seem clear enough, that the wretched man who gets drunk, beats his wife and starves his children, would have no hope of an angel; but he has perhaps a houseful pleading with him and ministering to him every day, because, bad as he is, he is not the son of perdition, but a son of man. When your son has grown to be a man, and you can order his steps no longer, it may then be his destiny to go to some place a mile south of his home; but, in his wild wilfulness, he turns his face north, and then it is seven and twenty thousand miles of weary travelling to get there. Will the angel of your love ever leave him; or will his weariness and pain and sorrow be only a curse to him; It is a horrible thing to teach that the Almighty made even the fiends only to torment us, to lead us wrong and lure us down; and then, at last, to listen while they send up yells of fierce laughter over our hapless misery. What I do I must stand by; no doubt of that, if I will not take refuge in the infinite pity and pardon. The wages of sin is death,—death when the sin is done, death right along; the deadening and darkening of all I might have been, had I done right right on. But, when the angels above me are powerless; when my mother's love, and my father's faith, and wife and children and friends, all fail, when all the great influences from heaven fail, and I *will* rush on and down,—then the angels come from below in terrible shapes perhaps, and armed with dire torments: but they come to save me and mean to save me.



Still the other is the nobler application. When a man is on the right way, his heart open to heaven, his life a prayer to be right ; is longing right, striving right, and fighting, like Bunyan's Christian, up and down ; and who though he may plunge into fits of despond, and wander in shadows of death, and get locked up in dungeons of despair, will never, if he know it, turn his back on the one right way,—on *this* son of man the angels descend in constant grace ; and even the things that come from below and appal him, when once the knight has well fought his battle, are turned into forms of beauty, the daughters of the king.

And be sure I do not mean by all this, merely that elemental properties, and providential occurrences, and men good and bad, and nature in her glory and grandeur and terror, are the only angels that attend such a life, coming from below and above to be its ministers. I do mean all these. I can see how tribulation, and persecution, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword, and life, and death, and principalities, and powers, and things present, and things to come, *may* all be ministering angels ; but I cannot strip life of loftier influences than these, that are yet lower than the incoming of the Holy Ghost.

I have a friend, for instance, who is so sure that the child gone out of her arms comes back to her as a ministering angel, that the belief wins her out of her mourning, and fills her, I know, with a perfect peace. Now, who am I that I shall say, "My friend, you are mistaken" ? I watch the eyes of this son of man, and see them fill with the light of heaven, as he recognizes the presence of spiritual things I can only see distantly and dimly or not at all. Who am I that I should say, "What you see as a person, I see as a principle ; and I am right, and you are wrong" ? I know, as well as Newton did, that two and two make four ; that is a principle, it is plain to both of us. But I stumble and stand stricken at the portals of a world in the line of that principle, that opens to him into an infinite beauty and goodness. Yet, because I cannot see which he can see, shall I say, "You are the victim of geometrical ~~imagin~~inations ; there is nothing beyond simple addition ?" As

I show most wisdom when I sit at the feet of the master in geometry, and accept his revelation, inasmuch as it is deeper and better than my own ; so I show most wisdom when I sit at the feet of this Master, who has most insight into spiritual things, listening reverently to what he can tell me ; whose powers so far surpass my own.

So, in this loftiest sense, I cannot strip the world of angels, and send them back into dim and distant ages.

“ I think the sudden joyance, that illumes  
A child's mouth sleeping, unaware may run  
From some soul newly loosened from earth's tombs ;  
I think the passionate sigh, which, half begun,  
I stifle back, may reach and stir the plumes  
Of some tall angel standing in the sun.”

But this insisted on,—that wonderful spiritual powers, of the loftiest order, are all about my life, only hidden because that is best. There waits that vaster order of ministers which includes whatever beside can be an angel. And, in naming these finally, I cannot do better than follow the track of illustration I have already made, and say, that to us, as to our great forerunner, whatever influences in the world and in life touch us to the quick, whether they come from below or from above, if we are in the line of divine laws and leadings, are all ascending or descending angels.

The little child comes, with its crumb of utterly helpless humanity. And, if it were possible to be purely impersonal spectators, I suppose there would be no greater wonder on the earth than the almost infinite patience of the mother with its habits, ailments, and, if it were not just what it is, its endless annoyances. Yet in that one small thing is hidden both angels. It is not the smile she gets ; not the wealth of beauty she sees, thank God, whether the world can see it or no ; not the freshness of its opening life,—not these only, these angels from above ; but its very waywardness and greediness, its fractiousness and sleeplessness, develop in her nature deep springs of love, that could never come out of its absolute perfection. From below as well as from above, the angel comes to all true mothers from all children ; and no mother can afford to lose one of these ministries.

And as the life grows in us, the angels still come from either hand. Our home is holy; good angels are always lighting on it out of heaven: but we leave it, as Jacob did, before we find out all about its angelhood. When the lad gets into the wilderness, with a stone for his pillow, then only he is for the first time aware of both the angels. And, in the full tide of the life of a son of man, sturdily bent on fighting the good fight clean through, the angels are everywhere. Let the young man keep himself pure, be the man he ought to be and can be, and then the woeful painted shams on our streets, instead of being a danger and a snare, will even come to be a means of grace; for they will fill him with a great, sorrowful, manly pity, that ever one, who was some mother's child and is some man's sister, should lose so dismally her glory and her crown. Nay, he will be more human at the thought of the inhumanity that has made her what she is; and, instead of sneering at all women because she is so fallen,—as if a fool should sneer at the constellations because of the falling stars,—when God shall wake him out of his sleep, and say, "Behold the woman that I have made for thee?" he will reverence her with a more sacred reverence, and love her with a holier love.

Indeed, I know of no way in which a man or woman, determined toward whatsoever things are true, will not find the angels climbing up as well as coming down to him. What, I pray you, had Luther been, had all Christendom come over to his side the moment he launched his thesis; or Cromwell, had there been no Naseby or Marston Moor? What had Wesley been as Archbishop of Canterbury, or Washington as the bosom-friend of George the Third? What had Howard been but for the prisons that were a disgrace to the worst ages, or Lady Russell but for the martyrdom of her husband, or Florence Nightingale but for the Circumlocution Office? Not that these things are there, that the man or woman may reap renown; but being there, and they right in their track and true to the duty they present, they find, in some way, that what was in the doing the hardest and saddest thing in their life was still so transmuted in the process as to be come an angel. So a shak-bog in Lancashire ministered to Stephenson, and the water

flowed for Fulton, and the lightning flashed for Franklin, and steam hissed for Watt, and the electric fluid pulsed for Morse. So mere pigments and chemicals come up and meet in Hunt and Church, the angels of inspiration that come down; then, from the sons of God and daughters of men, again other angels are born, that stand on the canvas, a glory and a praise.

It will be very pleasant and good that every man in this church succeed in his calling. It is indispensable that the very hardships and hindrances that rise up to appal him shall, by his right determination, turn to ministering angels. And I can hardly trust myself to say what angels couch in the saddest places of our life,—in the sick-room, by the deathbed, in the shadows of a sore disappointment, in the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, in the very dungeons of despair. We shrink and shudder, and say, "I shall go down to my grave mourning." But some morning, all at once, we bethink us of the little key called *promise*; and it opens the dungeon door, and we creep out, blinking sadly into the sun. But there is the sun, sure enough, and we had thought he would never shine again; and here are the green pastures, and there the shining river. And men and women look at us with a new tenderness, because our lot has been so sad. Then the song sings itself somehow again; and, while we should shrink and shudder just as much as next time, we cannot but discover how, in our very griefs, there were hidden angels reaching up to hide, within the dark experience, some treasure of patience or trust we could never have possessed, had the angels only descended on us, and our life been one long joy.

And I know, when I say all this, that I speak to common experience through the whole range of this angelhood. I think we do not begin to realize as we ought what ministries cluster round our life, to aid us in being what we may be,—angels, angels, every one, thick about us every day, bearing us in their hands, and lifting us up when we are fallen. Their faces gladden us when we do well, and grow very sad at us when we sin. Ay, and in some way those that we speak of and think of as in heaven love us still with all the old love of earth, and all the new love of heaven together. So, because they love us still,

we are still one, our souls are in theirs, and they in ours. We touch hands in the spirit, and the light that is not the light of the sun covers and enfolds us all.

## X.

## The Fear of God.

1 PETER ii. 17: "Fear God."

I WANT to say, as an introduction to this sermon, that no writer or speaker in the Bible begins his revelation by trying, first of all, to prove that there is a God. In no part of the Bible is such proof ever attempted. These men appear to believe that the question is settled in some other way than by reasoning; or they feel that trying to prove the being of God is a lower thing than that which they are sent to do; or they are so filled with great sense of his presence, that they do not believe it possible for a sensible man to doubt about his being, any more than to doubt about the sunlight on a summer's day,—living in a focus of belief, like that man who, brought before the Parliament of Toulouse on the charge of atheism, lifted a straw from the ground, and, holding it up before his accusers, said, "This straw compels me to believe that there is a God." But, while these men all believe that there is a God, they disagree very widely about his nature and character, and how he is related to man. To one he is a terror and perplexity, to another a supreme love; to one a power beyond all power, to another a limited, struggling principle; to one a grim Eastern despot, to another a forgiving Father,—his face beaming with love to this man, but to that man black with vindictive vengeance. A great deal of the trouble that men come to in trying to reconcile these things as they are found in the Bible, lies in their utter antagonism, and they can never be reconciled for that reason: therefore we can only take them as we find them, and test them by the truth itself. I intend to do this, as far as I am able, in the discussion of that character of God by which we are bidden to *fear* him. I think there are some thoughts of the fear of God that we may wonder. I propose to name some hurtful and some useful

fears of God common among men to-day, and to point out their value in the human life.

I. There is, first of all, a fear of God which to me appears to be a reproduction, measure, or color of the national life, different as the nations differ. I believe it to be impossible to bring a Frenchman and a German, or a Scotchman and an Irishman, or any two men that reach back into a radical difference of race, to regard God in the same way. Indeed we see this difference in two children of the same family. One child will rebel and take the penalty, snap his fingers and do it again; while another will tremble and shrink and fear. One will say prayers, and brood over those mysterious promptings of the soul that seem like the audible whispers of angels to some children; while another will appear to be shut altogether out of this heaven, revelling in the fresh new life of the present with a wealth of enjoyment past all telling,—“of the earth, earthy.” So there are nations that are lightsome, careless, earthy, objective; and nations that are deep, stern, solemn, subjective; and the national nature colors the great central idea of God.

Where the father in the home is a fear, the God above is a fear. Where the father is careless, light-hearted, easily bought off, blending laughter and tears, smiles and frowns, a kiss and a blow, there the Holy Mother can turn the tides of fate, and the Friar make a good thing out of what, to a deeper-hearted people, is the dreadful, steady, immaculate justice. The Frenchman who could not stay to morning mass, but left his card upon the altar, flashed a light across the world that revealed the real texture of the French soul as vividly as you shall see it, if you watch for a year in the church of the Madeline, in Paris. And when the Scotchman went away from the kirk, for the first time in his life, to hear an Episcopal service, in which a fine organ played a prominent part, and said, as he came away, “Oh! it’s verra bonnie; but it’s an awfu’ way of spending the Sabbath,” he touched the deep, stern Scottish character,—that, as some one has said, “delights to praise the Lord by singing infinitely out of tune”—better than it could be touched in a volume of disquisition.

So, friends, in a broad, national way, we take the thing that is nearest us to touch the infinite.

The glass through which we see God is darkened by our own breath. Some shadow of the dark or bright we cast of our own free will. But more than all that is this primitive, mysterious shadow of the race,—the shadow cast by blood and climate and circumstance, determining for all men—save, it may be, one in a thousand—whether their Supreme shall be revealed in the thunders of Sinai, or the sorrows of Olivet, or the glories of Zion,—a power that waits on our birth to take us up and mould us, and which smiles to hear us say, “What I will be I will.” For as you may find the Soldanella Alpina, piercing through the snows upon the lower Alps, leaning its frail purple blossom over the fearful icy clefts, and the Victoria Regia in the hot lagoons of the South, opening her vast, shining petals to glisten in the sun, but never the great lily on the mountain, or the blue bell in the lake; so the idea of God is moulded, more or less, by the great ranges of the race, the intimate life-blood of the country and the providence.

“The Ethiop’s god has Ethiop’s lips,  
Black cheek and woolly hair,  
And the Grecian god a Grecian face,  
As keen-eyed, cold, and fair.”

II. But, in our own nation, where so many nativities centre, the idea of God and the consequent fear of God differ very greatly. And I have thought that it might be of use to you, that I should note some forms of that fear as it exists all about us, and tell you what I think is a false and degrading, then what is a true and elevating, fear of God, for us here, and to-day.

The first and lowest form is a fear of God as a jailer and executioner, who stands and waits until that sure detective, Death, shall hunt the criminal down, and bring him into court (where, by the way, there is no jury,—a thing that certainly would not be omitted if these Western nations had written the Bible), and where, really without trial,—for his condemnation is a foregone conclusion,—he is turned into the despair and torment of the lost. This is the low, coarse, hell-fire fear,—  
[REDACTED] described in a quotation that every preacher of this


school can repeat to you as readily as he can repeat the beatitudes, and that is sure to find a place in the revival season, which indeed would be incomplete without it. The writer is describing a death bed, and tells you,—

“ In that dread moment, how the frantic soul  
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement ;  
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,  
But shrieks in vain ! How wishfully she looks  
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers !  
A little longer, yet a little longer,  
Oh might she stay to wash away her stains,  
And fit her for her passage !  
Her very eyes weep blood, and every groan  
She heaves is big with horror ; but the foe,  
Like a staunch murderer steady to his purpose,  
Pursues her close through ever lane of life,  
Nor misses once the track, but presses on ;  
Till, forced at last to the tremendous verge,  
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin.”

Now, if you can bring a man to believe this, and to believe that God is to this dreadful penalty what the soul is to the body, what the burning is to the fire, the very life of the eternal torture, replying “ Never, never, never ” to every cry out of the pit of “ Oh, when will this agony be over ? ”—then you have a fear of God in that man beside which the fear of a slave toward a cruel driver is a pleasant, frisky thing : and such a fear, when it strikes root in a man, can have but one of two results : it places him in a bitter, hopeless, blasphemous atheism, such as you often find in isolated communities that have heard only these dreadful teachers ; or it forces him into a slavish, crouching, abject submission, where every free and noble aspiration is lost in the one great hunger to be on good terms with such a dreadful master. The Pagan, on this plane of belief, is wiser than the Christian. He says boldly, that the doer of this is the *evil* spirit, and so he tries to be on good terms with him. But wherever such a fear has a real place in the soul of man or woman, African, Indian, or Saxon, in that soul the love of God, or even a true fear of God, is utterly out of the question. It destroys every fair blossom of the soul ; it leaves nothing to ripen,—nothing beautiful, even to live.



III. Then, to the eye of the resolute Christian thinker,—who dares not, as Coleridge has said, “love even Christianity better than the truth, lest he shall come to love his own sect better than Christianity, and at last himself better than all,”—there is another form of the fear of God, not the best by far, but far better than this utterly slavish fear. I mean that in which God becomes the embodiment of pure bargain, exacting from us, to the uttermost penny or the uttermost quivering nerve, whatever is due,—no more, no less. Here God appears with the guards and sanctities of the law about him, self-imposed and self-respected. The man need not contract the debt if it does not please him; but, if he does contract it, he must pay, or another must pay for him. Then the son of the great creditor gives his own body to the knife, and bears the intolerable agony instead of the debtor. Now there is a touch of sublimity in this conception. I do not wonder that Paul, standing where he did, should be so filled with enthusiasm by it, and should run all over the world to tell it, with strong crying and tears. To Paul, educated in the belief that a sacrifice was imperative, this was a wonderful revelation,—the awful debt paid,—paid by the Son in the gift of his life. And to-day this form of the fear of God—even where it makes the man into a wretched, shiftless debtor, and God into a stern creditor, yet with such infinite deeps of tenderness in his heart, that he will give his own Son for us all—creates a far nobler issue than that in which Antonio must quiver in agony for ever, if for no debt of his own, then for a debt contracted by his remotest ancestor. There is that in this idea, which has carried a wonderful weight with it,—such a fear has its own touch of tender reverence. Convince a man that this is true, and he will be awe-stricken and inspired to some fearful love. The life and death that hangs on such conditions must be of vast importance, and a God at once so relentless and so merciful cannot be slighted.

Yet when we come to question the system, it will not stand. The moment you open the idea with the master-key of the Fatherhood of God, you begin to see that it cannot be true.  the father punishing the brother who is innocent for the

brother who is guilty. And you cannot help seeing, that, however willing the brother may be to bear, it is against the nature of true greatness in the father to inflict the penalty. It is no more *right* to do so, than it was right to punish the French page for the fault of the French prince. If you admit the principle, you do so at the expense of the clearest ideas of justice that are found in your own soul, and that guide you in every other decision. Either the doctrine must be wrong in some radical way, or the ideas that are right in every thing beside are wrong in this. If it was right that Christ should bear your sins in his own body on the tree, according to the common interpretation of that doctrine, it will be right for you to punish the elder child in your home the next time the younger breaks into some mad freak of temper. Besides, this doing wrong with the sure conviction that some one must suffer for it, and then crouching down behind another while he bears the blow; this running into a debt that you are sure another will have to pay; this lying on the shady side of the barn all through the summer, because you know you can beg enough corn to put you through the winter, from the man who toils all day in the hot sun, and who loves you so well, good, merciful man that he is, that you are sure he will not let you starve,—does *not* appear to me to be the best way to promote a stout, deep, steady, personal manliness. If you take the principle out of the realm of religious ideas, and bring it into common life, as a rule, it makes a man small, tricky, and vicious. Then this unlimited promise to pay creates all sorts of unfair and unsound debts. When the common run of men believe that they can have all they ask for, they are not likely to be particular about pennies. Our government is cheated every day in the exact ratio of the confidence of depraved rogues, that they can get their claims pulled through, and the better the man to endorse the claim, the more they will put down. If a good man will say this is all right when it is all wrong, they will slide in another cipher with perfect assurance. Now meet this doctrine of vicarious payment fairly,—consider it as if you heard it for the first time. If you will not be afraid of polarized words and ideas, you will see that *this* must be the

result to most men of even the advanced doctrine, that God is an embodiment of justice or bargain, demanding strict payment, but willing to accept any gold, if it be gold. It breaks up the inner fastnesses of the man's soul, by pushing his ultimate responsibility upon another. It makes God fearful, not because I owe him, but because he will be sure to make his claim good somewhere. It makes a man false in the precise measure of his own essential meanness. So that it was perfectly natural for that wretched man in Philadelphia to plot all the week how to cheat his bank out of unlimited thousands, and then on the Sunday go to Girard College and snuffle to the boys, "Now, my young friends, I have come here to-day to try if I can save one soul;" because saving a soul and standing square in absolute personal righteousness is by such doctrine not essentially the same thing. In a word, it uncentres a man. It lowers lofty standards so that you need not climb up painfully to reach them; but just slide along the dead level, and you are there. It fills the world with churches, but the Church with worldliness. The result is,—

"God and the world we worship both together;  
 Draw not our laws to him, but his to ours:  
 Untrue to both, so prosperous in neither,  
 A chilling summer bringing barren flowers."

So then we must—

"Unwise in our distracted interests be;  
 Strangers to God and true humanity."  
 Too good for great things, and too great for good,  
 Letting I dare not wait upon I would."

IV. But a far higher fear of God is to fear him as we fear the surgeon, who *must* cut out some dreadful gangrene in order to save the life. Such a fear as this really touches the outskirts of love,—it is love and fear blended. When I went to Fort Donelson to nurse our wounded men, it was my good fortune to be the personal attendant of a gentleman whose skill as a surgeon was only equalled by the wonderfully deep, loving tenderness of his heart, as it thrilled in every tone of his voice

and every touch of his hand.\* And it all comes up before me now, how he would come to the men, fearfully mangled as they were, and how the nerve would shrink and creep; and how, with a wise, hard, steady skill, he would cut to save life, forcing back tears of pity only that he might keep his eye clear for the delicate duty, speaking low words of cheer in tones heavy with tenderness; then, when all was over, and the poor fellows, fainting with pain knew that all was done that could be done, and done only with a severity whose touch was love, how they would look after the man as he went away, sending unspoken benedictions to attend him. Now, a fear like this is almost the loftiest fear of God that has come to the human soul. Here we find ourselves among all sorts of depravities. Sins that are as certainly shattering even to the body as the splint of a shell or a rifle bullet, hit thousands of our fellows on every side. *They hit us.* We can all count some friend or kinsman who has been killed by sin as surely as if he had been shot down; and it may be not one of us can look back from the standpoint of forty years, and say, "I am willing to take the unalterable and eternal consequence of all my deeds done to man and woman, ever since I was a man." And this consciousness of something wrong in us, this sight of something wrong about us, makes havoc of the peace of the soul; we feel in our own life a thread of the common cancer.

Again, not sin only, but death, is fearful to many of us; we shrink from the touch of God, as the man shrinks from the surgeon's knife. It is doubtless some pain to enter into *any* life, and that is why we shrink from it. It must be some pain to the worm in the water to strip away the dear old shell in which it has lived for seventy years (the seventy years of a worm), to pierce out into the air and spread its wings, though the next moment it shall exult and sing as it floats in the wonderful new

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\* My position as nurse for this gentleman, Dr. R. L. Rea, of this city, gave me such insight as inspired this poor tribute to his worth and goodness. He was one of a noble band, all full of the same spirit. I am glad to say such words of them, and all the more that I am sure they never expected to hear them.

world, with the rich color, and the sunshine, and the unbounded gladness. Now there is this intuition of our intimate dependence on God in every soul. Are we in sin? God must help us out of it finally, in some quick, painful way, as the surgeon helps the sufferer. Our suffering appeals at once to his pity, his mercy, and his love. Are we in life? Through him we must brave the great change of our being, and begin to live again in some wonderful new way. So comes this fear of God,—at once a shrinking and a clinging, inevitable and fearful. And this is about as far as most liberal Christians go: they accept this life as a mystery of trouble, and expect that God, who has certainly brought them into it, will certainly help them through it. So, with a touch of terror, as a woman would trust herself in a frail boat on our lake because she believed in the captain, though the waters were turbulent and the sky dark, we trust ourselves to God, and bear the peril as bravely as we can,—not always quite sure that we shall win through, yet as the life deepens, watching, with ever-fresh trust, the pilot at the helm, sure, as the days wear on, that the master knows best what to do, and that we have only to bear the burden, meet the inevitable lot, and trust to the end.

V. Then, finally, there is a fear of God which is more of love than fear,—a fear that has *no* torment. There is an inspiration by which our duties rise up before us, vested in a nobleness like that which touches the landscape for a great painter. The true artist works ever with a touch of fear. He stands at his task, his heart trembling with the great pulses of his conception. Carefully, fearfully, as if his soul were to be saved by it (as indeed in some measure it will be), he tries to bring out the mystery of truth and beauty. There is a deep gladness and a deep fear as, line by line, touching and retouching with infinite care, he perfects at last to the visible sight the vision of beauty that was in him. And he is fearful exactly as he sees the perfection of the thing he is trying to embody. A dauber has far less fear than Church when he paints Niagara. Now, believe me, God hides some ideal in every human soul. At some time in every life we feel a trembling, fearful longing to do some good thing. Every life finds its noblest spring of excellence in this hidden

impulse to do our best. There is a time when we are not content to be such merchants or doctors or lawyers as we see on the dead level or below it. The woman longs to glorify her womanhood as sister, wife, or mother. I say, in the heart of us all, there is this higher thought of life struggling for a realization. All at some time cry, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfect," and *then* the fierce conflict of life begins. The tempter tells me that if I try to be an ideal merchant or lawyer or doctor I shall go under. If it is a rule to mix inferior wheat, and call it No. 1; to pull a rogue through in spite of justice, when all the world knows he his a rogue; to keep a patient lingering a little for an extra fee,—then I must do it or I am not fit for this world. I must go where the wheat is all pure and plump, and the judge has a clean calendar, and the inhabitants never say, "I am sick." If the woman will not dress, and dance over ground enough to kill her if she had to walk it doing good, in order to secure some darling match for herself or daughter, then she must go where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. The young man must see life, or be a spoon. Friends, that is the devil,—the temptation in the wilderness, that every soul must meet and faint and stagger under, in some form or other. But here, on the other side, is God,—God standing silently at the door all day long,—God whispering to the soul, that to be pure and true is to succeed in life, and whatever we get short of that will burn up like stubble, though the whole world try to save it. Now here is the fear of God that is loftiest of all. It comes to youth and maiden at the portals of life, to make them beautiful in all sweet sunny humanities, yet to keep them pure as the angels. It comes to the wedded man and wife whose little children are beginning to trouble the home, just as the angel troubled the waters in the ancient pool, that the home may be a fountain of healing for the hurts and bruises of the world; and it helps them to look into that future when those little pattering feet shall tramp strong and steady in the ranks of life, whose voices breathe out comfort and inspiration for fainting souls, and those hands, now so restless with electric mischief, grow skilful in the achievements of the age. It whispers how it will lead you and help you, if you will but keep

your soul open to it; how you shall be able to bring those children into the great ranks of God's holiest and best, as you take heed to that monitor. It comes to the aged, and brings sounds from over that golden sea beyond which abides their home. It tells them to listen to no tempter that would make the grave the end of all, but to keep an open, tremulous ear for the whispers that ever come from the upper world, when the turmoil of life is over and the pilgrim rests for a season. O friends, it is to every man and woman the still small voice, whispering whatever at that moment we *must* hear if we will live! Not shouting, but *whispering*, so that we must listen with a loving fear lest we miss the accent; not repeating louder for our heedlessness, but whispering, so that we must fear lest we miss the word. God with us, not as an eastern despot, or a stern bargainer, or a painful helper, but a pleading love. Not the thunder, beating in terrific reverberations down the peaks of Sinai, but that gentle voice on the mount of the beatitudes, crying, "Blessed are the poor, blessed are the meek, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the mourners, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

## XI.

### A Talk to Mothers.

1 SAM. ii. 18, 19: "Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child. Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year."

THIS is part of a most touching story, how God gave to a Hebrew mother a man-child, many years after her wedding; and the gift was such a gladness, that she dedicated him back to God, and carried him back to the temple, there to minister all his life. And once every year she made him a little coat, and carried it up to the temple herself, when she went to see her child, whom she called Samuel, which, being interpreted, is, "He who was asked of God."

We have three separate statements of the nature of a little child. The first is, that, in some way, it is utterly

depraved and lost; not capable of conceiving one good thought, saying one good word, or doing one good thing, being—

“Sprung from the man whose guilty fall  
Corrupts his race and taints us all.”

This statement, to my mind, is untrue, for two reasons. The first is, that it clashes with the loftiest revelation ever made to our race about the child-nature. Jesus said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” One cannot help seeing here the inevitable logic. If the child is utterly depraved, and of such is the kingdom of heaven, wherein does the kingdom of heaven differ from the kingdom of hell?

I sat at my desk, trying to put my second and most impregnable objection, as it springs out of the nature of the little child itself, into words. And one sat at my feet, rich in the possession of a new toy; while another went and came, singing through the fresh spring morning. Then I said in my heart, “O God, my Father! when I can say that this morning sunshine, pouring into my room fresh from the fountains of thy light, is a horror of great darkness, and the voices of the singing birds are intended to echo to us the cry of lost souls; and that the ever-changing glory of spring, summer, autumn, and winter is but the ever-shifting shadow of the frown of God on a sin-stricken world,—then I can say that the light that comes out of the eyes of that little child, who has not yet framed its tongue to call me father, is the bale-fire of a soul already akin to the lost; and the sweet confidences of the other, the unlearned blasphemies of despair.”

The second theory is one that I have heard from some liberal Christians,—that the heart and nature of a little child are like a fresh garden-mould in the spring-time. Nothing has sprung out of it: but the seeds of vice are already bedded down into it; and we must plant good seeds, and nurse them until there is a strong growth of the better promise,—carefully, all the while, weeding out whatever is bad as it comes to the surface. At the first glance, this seems to be about the truth. Still, I fear it has not come so much out of that true philosophy which is founded on a close observation of



our nature, as it has come out of a desire not to differ so very far from those who denounce us heartily as unchristian.

Such an idea of the child-nature is, after all, a moderate theory of infant depravity ; and as such I reject it, so far as it gives *any* preoccupation and predominance to sin, and accept the third theory, as the true and pure gospel about the child-nature ; namely, that the kingdom of heaven, in a child, is like unto a man that sowed *good* seed in his field ; but afterward, while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away ; and when the blade sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. That is the true statement of this fact, my friends, as I understand it. The good seed is sown *first*,—good principles and powers are the first to be set down in the fresh, young heart ; while even the tares themselves are not utterly worthless weeds, but degenerate wheat, a poorer grain, but never utterly useless or worthless ; for the better kinds of it can be made into a rather bitter bread, while even the worst can be burnt up, and be made to enrich the ground for another harvest of the nobler grain. The good is primary, and purely good ; the bad is secondary, and not totally bad. And every little child ministers before the Lord, and every mother makes his garments from year to year.

I propose to speak briefly on the nature and possibilities of this mother influence, what it is, and what it may be. And note, first of all, that while in after-life the father may come to an equal or even stronger influence over the child,—in the plastic morning of life, when the infant soul puts on its first robes of joy and love and faith and wonder, the hand of the mother alone is permitted to give them their rich quality and texture ; and, to her loving and skilful eye only is left the decision of their comfort and adaptation to the ever-varying nature of every little one that comes into the world. God has made it so in his infinite and unfailing providence.

“ Women know

The way to rear up children (to be just) ;

They know a simple, merry, tender knack

Of tying sashes, fitting baby-shoes,

And stringing pretty words that make no sense,  
 And kissing full sense into empty words ;  
 Which things are corals to cut life upon,  
 Although such trifles. Children learn, by such,  
*Love's holy earnest* in a pretty play,  
 And get not over-early solemnized.  
 . . . . . Fathers love as well,  
 . . . . . but still with heavier brains,  
 And wills more consciously responsible,  
 And *not as wisely, since less foolishly.*"

To every little child, in the beginning, this earth is without form and void ; and the first great light that God brings out of the darkness is the face of its mother, and the first sound that ever enters the silent sea of the infant soul is the voice of the mother as she bends over it, endeavoring to find some answering glance and call of recognition. And God has made it so, that the first sure sound the mother ever hears breaking out of that silence, is more to her than the great harmonies that were heard when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. So, how can we wonder that the tender nature of Christ gathered itself into grave rebuke to those who would hinder mothers from bringing little children to him, that he might put his hands upon them and bless them ? To me, the question is not whether the children will or will not be benefited by that benediction, and so whether it is worth all that trouble and hindrance to the Master to let them come ; but whether that most noble and tender of all souls shall acknowledge that most noble and tender of all things,—the longing of the mother for a blessing upon the child.

Here, then, is the great fact set clearly before us. Mothers, your heart is the first Paradise to every little child God gives you ; he finds rivers of water there, and the fruit and flowers of his earliest human world. While he can rest there, no wild beast can make him afraid ; and when at last he eats of the inevitable knowledge of good and evil, and is fallen and naked and ashamed, your love may so clothe him, as he passes out of his Eden, that he will always live in hope of the Paradise regained. And so "we only never call him fatherless who has God and his mother."

Then, secondly, while it is eminently true, that the little

child has such rich endowment; and you have such a wonderful pre-eminence, it is also true, that the possibilities open out two ways,—you may greatly blight his life, or you may greatly bless it. The garments that mothers fit on to the spirits of little children, like the garments that they fit to the outward form, only more certainly, have a great deal to do with that child's whole future life. Let me give you three instances out of many that are kept in the archives of the world.

What would you judge to be the foremost thing in Washington? The obvious answer is, his perfect, spotless, radiant integrity. The man does not live in this world who believes that any letter or despatch or state paper will ever be found in any country, which, if well understood, can call this great quality into question, after he had come to the prime and power of his manhood,—as for that matter at any time in his whole life. Now it is an instructive fact for mothers, that of the few books that have come down to us with which the mother of Washington surrounded her boy in early life, the one most worn and well used is a book on morals, by that eminent pattern of the old English integrity, Sir Matthew Hale; and the place where that book opens easiest, where it is most dog-eared and frail, is at a chapter on the great account which we must all give of the deeds done in the body. Before that boy went out of his home, his mother took care to stamp the image and superscription of integrity deeply on his soul.

What, after his great genius, would you mention as the most notable thing in William Ellery Channing? We answer at once, his constant loyalty to a broad, free, fearless examination of every question that could present itself to him; a frank confession of what he believed to be true about it, no matter what was said against it; and an active endeavor to make that truth a part of his life. Channing testified, with a proud affection, of his mother: "She had the firmness to examine the truth, to speak it, and to act upon it, beyond all women I ever knew." And so it was, that, when her frail boy must go out into the battle, she had armed him with the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation.

What, again, after his genius, stands foremost in the life of

Byron? One answer only can be given,—his utter want of faith in woman. That one thing did more to turn his life into wormwood and gall, than all beside. He lost faith, first of all, in his mother. In and through his childhood, it was his mother that clothed him in the poisoned garments that so wofully penetrated through all his after-life, and made him the most miserable man in his generation.

And so one might go on reciting instances almost endlessly, if it were needful, to show how true it is, that the mother makes the man. What then, positively, shall the mother do who will do her best?

I will answer this question first by noting what she shall *not* do. And I cannot say one thing before this,—that the spiritual garment she fashions for her little ones from year to year shall not be *black*. All mothers know how long before their children can utter a word they can read gladness or gloom in the mother's face. Let her smile, and the child will laugh; let her look sad, and it will weep. Now, some mothers, if they have had great troubles or are much tried in their daily life, get into a habit of sadness that is like a second nature. The tone of their voice and the tenor of their talk is all in the pensive, minor key. They even "sigh when they thank God." They talk with unction of who is dead, and how young they were, and how many are sick, and what grief is abroad altogether on the earth. And the child listens to all that is said. The mother may think he does not care; but, if my own earliest memories are at all true to the common childhood, he *does care*. These things chill him through and through. I remember how I carried the terror of such a conversation in my heart once for days and days, long after the good woman who had spoken had forgotten all about it. Mothers, your children have no part or lot in that matter; death has no dominion over *them*, and will not for this many a day to come: and it is foolish and wrong for you to lead them with you into its dark valley and shadow. If one of these little ones should be taken from you, it will be to him only as if he lay down to sleep. No sweet fruit of childhood can grow amid those grim shadows; he has his own little griefs too, already: he does not need yours. So, as he stands before the

Lord, and you fashion his spiritual garments from year to year, put plenty of gladness into them,—let the first fear wait for the first sin. In the kingdom of heaven, to which he now belongs, there is no death ; his life is hid with Christ in God.

Then I would ask that the garment of spiritual influence, which you are ever fashioning, shall not be of the nature of a *straight-jacket*. Has your boy a heavy foot, a loud voice, a great appetite, a defiant way, and a burly presence altogether ? Then thank God for it, more than if your husband had a farm where corn grows twelve feet high ; your child has in him the making of a great and good man. The only fear is, that you will fail to meet the demand of this strong, grand nature, and try to break where you ought to build. The question for you to solve, mother, is not how to subdue him, but how to direct him. Sometimes mothers are really selfish : they refuse to pay the price for this noble growth of childhood. It is a sad mistake to suppose, that this sturdy daring must be bad ; first the wheat, then the tares. Dr. Kane was a wonder of boisterous energy in childhood, climbing trees and roofs, projecting himself against all obstacles, until he got the name of being the worst boy in all Branchtown ; but time revealed the divinity of this rough life, when he bearded the ice-king in his own domain, and made himself a name in Arctic exploration second to none. The tumult, again, when Sydney Smith was a boy, was a marvel of boisterous clamor. But when that voice set itself to be heard in the "Edinburgh Review," it roused a whole kingdom ; and the abundant vitality that set all distracted in childhood, so penetrated and informed the whole after-life, as to make its record one of the best biographies in the English tongue. Do not break your child's passionate temper, but direct it. God knows, by and by, he will need it all to batter down great wrongs, and plead and work for the great right. Do not fret and fear over the predominance of the animal above the spiritual nature : it is all right that it should be so at the start. The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven. First comes that which is natural,—or, as the better translation has it, first comes that which is animal ; after-~~ward~~ that which is spiritual. Do you know that the pure, the

almost ethereal Channing was so full of this predominant animal nature in early childhood, that the first idea of glory in heaven, as he himself tells us, that ever dawned upon his mind, was in connection with an old colored cook. There is a good, wholesome oversight that is beautiful in all mothers ; but the true root of that ought to be a great conviction, that our nature is loyal, and needs no breaking. We never break a young tree ; and, thank God, deformity is the rare exception in the spirit, as in the form. Blessed is that mother who shall know this, and let every good gift of God in the little child have its own free play.

Then, positively, there is one most important principle that no mother can ever forget. A good and great man, whose children are remarkable for nobility and beauty, said to me once in a letter, "I count a great part of the grace in my children from a new reading of the old commandment. I read it always, 'Parents, obey your children in the Lord : for this is right.'" That I conceive to be especially the true reading for you, mothers. When he is altogether with you, his demands are especially sacred, and must be obeyed.

I shall not speak in any material sense ; but, when the child begins to think, he at once begins to question. He is set here in a great universe of wonder and mystery ; and he wants to know its meaning and the meaning of himself. But some mothers, when their children come to them with their questions in all good faith, either treat the question with levity, or get afraid, and reprove the little thing for asking. Mothers, this is all wrong. This is one of your rarest opportunities to clothe the spirit of your child in the fresh garments that will make him all beautiful, as he stands before the Lord. He can ask questions you cannot answer ; but be sure that the questions that can be answered are best answered simply and directly. The soul hungers and thirsts to know : indeed, it must know. Those moments are the seed-time ; and if you do not cast in the wheat, the enemy will sow the tares.

Then, as this primitive woman would be evermore careful to meet the enlarged form of her child, as she went to see him stand before the Lord from year to year, will you be careful to

meet the enlarged spirit of your child? I do fear for the mother who will not note how her child demands and needs ever new and larger confidences. The last thing mothers learn often is, that the child is always becoming less a child. It is a great blessing to that child whose mother can be well-timed, and yet perfectly delicate, in her revelations; who can know when to reveal truth and falsehood, nobility and meanness, purity and its opposite,—in thought and word,—yet not have the child look up in wonder to ask what she means; who can feel, in her prophetic and intuitive spirit, the true time for everything,—that she is never too late, and never too soon: whose children will bless her, because her words were always more of a revelation than of a warning or a rebuke. Mothers, as I speak to you so of your great trust, I feel still more deeply your great reward; for you are greatly rewarded. As I have thought of what I should say to you of what you should be, I have seemed all the while only to be recalling what a mother once was to a child. For my spirit went back through many years to a little valley, “among the rocks and winding scaurs,” where I saw a man and woman, in their early wedded prime, sitting together. And as I sat with them, watching their faces shine in the summer Sunday sunlight, they seemed to me as the faces of angels. Then the woman sang some words I have never forgotten, out of a sweet old Methodist hymn. These were the words:—

“How happy is the pilgrim’s lot!  
 How free from every anxious thought,  
 From worldly hope and fear!  
 Confined to neither court nor cell,  
 His soul disdains on earth to dwell;  
 He only sojourns here.”

And from that time, somehow, I knew, in a new way, that this was my mother. And now her hair is white as snow, and she bends, in the ripeness of her fruitful and graceful life, waiting for the angels to come and carry her, after her long widowhood, to another of the many mansions, where husband and sons are watching and waiting for her coming. And is not this what a  
 sons will tell of their mothers? Blessed is that man

whose mother has made all mothers worshipful ; blessed is that man who can make such an entry in his diary as this of Washington in his prime : " I got away, and spent the evening with my mother."

Mothers, you have great sorrows ; but then you have an exceeding joy. To you, more than to fathers, belongs the responsibility ; but to you, more than to them, comes the great reward. No cares, no tears, no efforts you make are ever really made in vain. When your child grows up to his manhood, if that is noble and beautiful, he will gladly say, " I owe it most of all to my mother." And, if it is lost and stricken with sin, he will fear above all the sorrow of his mother, or to meet his mother, or that she shall know of his sin. And the first pulses of his penitence will always come at the thought of his mother. And then if, after all your love and care, the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl broken, and your treasure is gathered into the safe keeping of the world to come, there may still come a solemn gladness, even through your woe, as you realize that he is not unclothed, but clothed upon. And you shall see the travail of your soul and be satisfied, because he is a nursing now of heaven.

" For ever and for ever,  
All in a happy home ;  
And there to stay a little while  
Till all the rest shall come.  
To lie within the light of God,  
Like a babe upon the breast,  
And the wicked cease from troubling,  
And the weary are at rest."



## XII.

### Healing and Hurting Shadows.

ACTS v. 15: "They brought the sick, and laid them that the shadows of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them."

THE incident chronicled in the text transpired in a time of strong excitement, when some fishermen of Galilee had sprung into what was as yet a very local prominence, and were melting and moulding men's hearts in the fire of a conversion fresh from heaven. They had done very great wonders under the pressure of that power for which we use the word "miracle," though it is about as indefinite as the Indian term, "big medicine." And these wonders were connected especially with the personal presence of one man, Peter. They roused the entire country-side. The sick and lame, it was rumored, had found a new life and health when this man touched them: then all who were sick, and all who had sick, began to hope. Vast numbers were instantly brought in to share the new blessing, far more than the mysterious power could cope with. There has almost always been a point at which the power to work these wonders becomes exhausted; but there is no boundary, thank God, for human hope and love. And so it was, that, for every one of these nameless sufferers, God had put sympathy and the longing to help them into some heart. Kindly hands ministered to them in the daytime: tireless watchers sat by them in the night. And these, seizing the great opportunity, came trooping in, bearing their sick with them, resolute to leave nothing untried that had a spark of hope in it. And, when there was no other hope that the blessing of healing would fall upon them, they brought their sick, and laid them where the *shadow* of Peter might touch them as he passed by.

And this, first of all, is a most touching thing, this solemn, silent trust in the shadow of a man. The curtain is lifted for a single instant. You see the fisherman pass in his homely garb. The sick are laid there in the narrow street, along which he is sure to come. You can observe the anxious attendants scanning the faces of the sufferers, to see if the tide of life rises

ever so little. A moment more, and the curtain falls: it is never lifted again. To us there is no result,—not a word that Peter's shadow did any good; that Peter said it was right or wrong for them to try so poor a chance; or that the experiment was ever tried again. And the incident has never been attached, like a steam-tug, to any dogma or doctrine, in order to drag it to the private wharf of a sectarian conclusion. The thing alone, just as it stands, is all that is left; and it is enough for my purpose, because it is the indication of a belief that stirred some human souls in old times, and ought to stir them still,—a belief that there is something in a shadow cast from one over another, of a deep and potent power; a deed done sometimes the hand has no part in; a word said the tongue never utters; a virtue going out of me, or a vice, apart from my determination; a shadow of my spirit and life, cast for good or evil, as certain and inseparable as my shadow on the wall.

And the bare fact, of itself, seems to be hinted, in many ways, to every man who will watch with care for what is going on under the surface of our life. For instance, there is some mysterious force by which men often move us in attraction or repulsion the first time we meet them,—cast a shadow of light or darkness we cannot account for, and cannot overcome. What these subtle influences are, no man has ever told us. We all learn to reverence such impressions, or rue it if we do not, because they are the shadow cast by a substance we cannot see, that is to act on us for bale or blessing. And—

“I do not like thee, Dr. Fell;  
The reason why I cannot tell;  
But—I do not like thee, Dr. Fell,”—

is the inner and instinctive verdict we pass on some men; probably, also, that some men pass on us. Their shadows hurt us: our shadows hurt them.

I have said, no man, so far, has been able to tell what this shadow is, or the substance out of which it springs. I presume it is as useless to search for it, as it is to search for the spring of the life itself. Perhaps it can never be made any clearer than by the oldest faith we can find concerning it.

that it is the influence of the holy or the infernal spirit, as it is cast for good or evil out of the life of man.

But in this sense I do not propose to dwell on the question. I should love to speak to you about some healing and hurting shadows far more easily understood,—shadows of a mighty moment, this way or that, we are casting every day, know we are casting them, and ought to know what they are coming to be and to do,—shadows cast out of a perverted or a purified life and purpose ; and so, in every way, of unspeakably vaster importance than the more occult, remote, and mysterious shadow these men and women in Jewry believed Peter cast, and we may believe we cast, in some fashion, while we may have no will at all in the thing we have done.

And, foremost of all shadows, of a greater bale or blessing than perhaps any other we can cast, is the shadow of the home ; the place where father, mother, and children dwell together ; where, four times in a century, God makes a new earth, and out of which he peoples a new heaven ; the most holy place on earth, the place no wise man will ever enter with a profane or careless step.

I have sat bareheaded in the noblest Gothic cathedral on the earth, listening to a choir and organ that to me seemed as the voices of the singers, and the music that is heard, when the martyrs enter heaven. And for years I sat, in my youth, in a simple country church, on every Sunday morning, joining in the old liturgies, that, in one form or another, had been said or sung ever since the Saxon embraced the Christian faith. Just beside where I sat was a figure carven in stone, the memorial of a man who came home, five hundred and fifty years ago, all broken from fighting for the Holy Land in one of the Crusades, and was laid there in the tomb to wait for the resurrection. And out of the low, latticed windows I could look on a green graveyard, where the dust of Roman and Saxon, Dane and Englishman, rested, after life's fitful fever, within the shadow of the awful mystery. And once, I remember, I rose in the gray light, and stood alone by Niagara, while the sound of its mighty thunder  
up fresh and pure, unbroken as yet and undefiled by the

clamor of those money changers who deserve a whip of not very small cords for profaning that place, in which, of all places, the soul longs to be alone with her God. And I feel no regret, that I did not realize how good the shadows are that were cast over me from those mighty waters, that noble temple, and that rustic church in which men and women have worshipped for a thousand years. I did feel those influences. These were sacred places. But the *most* sacred place, the holiest of all, the place whose shadow stretches over forty-five hundred miles of earth and sea, and forty years of time, and is still a shadow of healing, is a little place built of gray stone. It nestled under a hill that sheltered it from the blasts that came sweeping over the great moorlands out of the North. It was a cottage with one door, and two windows looking right into the eye of the South. A little clump of rose-bushes and a plum-tree grew fast by the door; and one branch of that tree, reaching up to the chamber-window, became, to a little child I used to know, what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to our first parents in Eden. For the branch once bore only one plum; and the good mother said, "My child, you must not eat that plum;" and rather proud the man is yet, that the boy obeyed his mother, and never did eat the plum. And yet I am not sure that there is much room to be proud. It was as it is with some other fruits on that tree of knowledge. The little hands did not pluck the fruit; but the little nails pecked it, until it was not fit for anybody else to pluck. And so I am led to wonder sometimes, whether it was not the best thing after all for those first parents to plunge in as they did, and get done with their Paradise if they must, rather than "keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the sense." But there, in that bright little home, hung round with pictures of a marvellous execution, Moses with the tables,—which were crimson: and Peter with a long beard,—which was green. There, bending over the picture in the great Bible, or listening to psalm or song or story, the child lived in the shadow of that home; and it became to him as the very gate of heaven, so dear and good, that no great cathedral,

no grand scene in nature, no place for worship anywhere, can be what that gray-stone cottage was, when the world was young, when roses bloomed, and fruit ripened, and snow fell, as if it were by an understanding between the child and the Maker,—they were always so exactly what he wanted ; and I doubt not there was such an understanding.

Friends, I wonder whether we have any deep consciousness of the shadows we are weaving about our children in the home ; whether we ever ask ourselves, if, in the far future, when we are dead and gone, the shadow our home casts now will stretch over them for bane or blessing. It is possible we are full of anxiety to do our best, and to make our homes sacred to the children. We want them to come up right, to turn out good men and women, to be an honor and praise to the home out of which they sprang. But this is the pity and the danger, that while we may not come short in any real duty of father and mother, we may yet cast no healing and sacramental shadow over the child. Believe me, friends, it was not in the words he said, in the pressure of the hand, in the kiss, that the blessing lay Jesus gave to the little ones, when he took them in His arms. So it is not in these, but in the shadow of my innermost, holiest self ; in that which is to us what the perfume is to the flower, a soul within the soul,—it is that which, to the child, and in the home, is more than the tongue of men or angels, or prophecy or knowledge, or faith that will move mountains, or devotion that will give the body to be burned. I look back with wonder on that old time, and ask myself how it is that most of the things I suppose my father and mother built on especially to mould me to a right manhood are forgotten and lost out of my life. But the thing they hardly ever thought of,—the shadow of blessing cast by the home ; the tender, unspoken love ; the sacrifices made, and never thought of, it was so natural to make them ; ten thousand little things, so simple as to attract no notice, and yet so sublime as I look back at them,—they fill my heart still and always with tenderness, when I remember them, and my eyes with tears. All these things, and all that belong to them, still come over me, and cast the shadow that forty years, many of them lived in a *new world*, cannot destroy.

I fear, few parents know what a supreme and holy thing is this shadow cast by the home, over, especially, the first seven years of this life of the child. I think the influence that comes in this way is the very breath and bread of life. I may do other things for duty or principle or religious training: they are all, by comparison, as when I cut and trim and train a vine; and, when I let the sun shine and the rain fall on it, the one may aid the life; the other *is* the life. Steel and string are each good in their place; but what are they to sunshine? It is said, that a child, hearing once of heaven, and that his father would be there, replied, "Oh! then, I dinna want to gang." He did but express the holy instinct of a child, to whom the father may be all that is good, except just goodness,—be all any child can want, except what is indispensable,—that gracious atmosphere of blessing in the healing shadow it casts, without which even heaven would come to be intolerable.

But to make this question clear, if we can, let me open to you a glimpse of some shadows that are being cast in some homes every day, not over children alone, but over men and women also.

Here is a man who has been down town all day, in the full tide of care, that from morning to night floods the markets, offices, and streets of all our great cities. Tired, nervous, irritable, possibly a little disheartened, he starts for his home. If it is winter when he enters, there is a bit of bright fire, that makes a bad temper seem like a sin in the contrast; a noise of children that is not dissonant; and an evident care for his comfort, telling, plainer than any words, how constantly he has been in the mind of the house-mother, while breasting the stress and strife of the day; while a low, sweet voice, that excellent thing in woman, greets him with words that ripple over the fevered spirit like cool water. And the man who can nurse a bad temper, after that, deserves to smart for it. There is no place on the earth, into which a man can go with such perfect assurance that he will feel the shadow of healing, as into such a home as that. It is the very gate of heaven.

But I will open another door. Here is a home into which

the man goes with the same burden on him, heart-sick and weary in every nerve and fibre of his nature, to find no forethought, no comfort, no repose. When he enters the house, querulous questions meet him as to whether he has forgotten what he ought never to have been required to remember. Plaintive bewailings are made to him of the sad seventy-seventh disobedience of the children, or the radical depravity of the servants; and a whole platoon-fire of little things is shot at him, so sharp and ill-timed, that they touch the nerve like so many small needles. It is in such things as these that the shadows are cast, that hurt, but never heal: that drive thousands of men out of their homes into any place that will offer a prospect of comfort and peace, even for an hour.

But let me not be unfair. The evil shadow may just as certainly come from the man. Here is another man in the mood I have tried to touch, tired, irritable, probably savage. All day long, he has fretted at the bit; but society has held him in. He goes home too, but it is to spume out his temper. He carries his dark face into the parlor; and one glance at it, nay, the very sound of his foot, casts a shadow that can hurt, but can never heal. If his wife is silent, he calls her sulky: if she speaks, he snaps her. If his children come to him with innocent teasings he would give a year of his life some day to bring back again, they are pushed aside, or sent out of the room, or even—God forgive him—are smitten. He eats a moody dinner: takes a cigar; bitter, I hope, and serves him right; takes a book, too,—not Charles Lamb or Charles Dickens, I warrant you; and, in one evening, that man has cast a shadow he may pray, some day, in a great agony, may be removed, and not be heard.

But that this is not so everywhere, or generally, how many happy homes can gladly testify! Believe me, the shadows of healing are far more and better than the shadows that hurt. I am not here to cramp life and nature, and to tell you it is harder to cast a shadow of blessing than of bane. The nature of the shadow springs from the nature of the tree; and, in this world, the upas and the poison vine are only here and there, while the oak and the apple stand by every cottage-door.

And so it is, that into the vast majority of homes, all over the earth, the husband and father comes, when the day is done, like the inpouring of a new life. He need only bring himself to be the most welcome guest. The wise men, who came only in the shadow of a star, did well to bring gold and frankincense and myrrh to insure their welcome, where the child lay; but the shepherds, who bore with them the shadow and song of the angels, needed no other gift.

Then, again, what shadows of healing fall, in their turn from the children! It has been my lot to see a good deal of home-life. I have lived in the old world and the new, very intimately for thirty-five years, among the poor; and in these years, since I became your pastor, in your homes and others like them, all over this city and country, I have been able from this experience to draw only one conclusion. It is, that no affliction that can ever come through children ever equals that which comes with their utter absence; while the heaviest affliction to most, the death of the little one, often casts a shadow of healing that could come in no other way.

I went one day to see a poor German woman, whose children had all been down with scarlet fever. Four were getting well again; one was dead. And it was very touching to see how the shadow of that dead child had come over the mother, and sent its blessing of healing through all the springs of her life. "These are beautiful children," I said.—"Oh, yes! but I should have seen the one that died."—"Good?"—"Yes; but he was an angel. Patient had they been in their illness,—very patient; but I should have seen the lamb that was gone,—he was *so* patient." So, then, I saw how it was the shadow of healing had touched her from the babe in heaven. While he was with her, he was like the rest: she held them all alike in her heart, and overshadowed them all alike with her love. But now, when he was gone, he cast the shadow. The little shroud was turned into a white robe, that glistened and shone in the sun of Paradise, so that she was blinded; the broken prattle had filled out into an angel-song; the face shone as the face of an angel; and, all unknown to herself, God had laid her where the shadow of the little



one up in heaven could touch her with its healing. And no shadow is so full of healing as that shadow of the child that is always a child in heaven. The most gentle and patient will sometimes feel a touch of irritation at the waywardness of the one that is with us ; but no father or mother in this world ever did bring back any sense of such a feeling toward the one that is gone. The shadow of healing destroys it for ever. Nay, it may be, that, when some shadow that hurts has settled down, they can hardly tell how, that between the father and mother, and holds hard on to the heart,—so that no prattle and laughter of the little ones in the home has power to lift and disperse it,—then one touch of that shadow cast from beyond the grave in one instant heals all the sickness.

“As through the land at eve we went,  
And plucked the ripened ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,—  
Oh, we fell out, I know not why,  
And kissed again with tears.  
For when we came where lies the babe  
We lost in former years,  
There, above the little grave,—  
There, above the little grave,—  
We kissed again with tears.”

So it is in some way true, that my shadow, the shadow of my spirit and life, is a subtle and wonderful substance too. I think that in some deep, far-reaching way, if my word is true, but my heart false, the heart casts a shadow that robs the word of its finest essence, so that every true man I speak to finds it difficult to believe me. And if my word is gentle, but my heart is savage, the gentle word will not win on true hearts, because the shadow of what is not gentle will destroy its essence. But just as in the fine touch of nature, in one of the stories of Mr. Dickens, where a man is made to say the most savage and bitter things, while yet his heart is a well-spring of love and gentleness, and a small bird sits all the while on his shoulder, not in the least alarmed ; so I may say hard things sometimes : if my heart is gentle, then the heart will cast the shadow, and will not even frighten a bird away.

Finally, within every healing shadow is God himself ; and so, though it seem to be a shadow of the sorest sorrow and pain, as it was to that poor woman, yet will it lift *me* upward, and lead me into the light. Indeed it cannot be a hurting shadow, if God is in it. I care not how painful, perplexing, and dark, the very darkness will be light about me. If he is with me, I will fear no evil. All the shadows of God are divine.

“ Many shadows there be, but  
Each points to the sun :  
The shadows are many,  
The sunlight is one.  
Life's fortunes may fluctuate ;  
God's love does not ;  
And his love is unchanged,  
While it changes our lot.  
Let us look to the light  
Which is common to all,  
And down to the shadows  
That ever do fall,—  
Ay, even the darkest,  
In this faith alone,  
That in tracing the shadows,  
We find out the sun.”

I remember going once to our lake shore with my children, who had carried me off with them to play. And sitting down on a sand-bank, while they strayed along the margin of the waters, I gradually got into a walking dream about the mighty inland sea. I thought of the primitive era, when by some new balancing of the internal fires, “God said, let the waters be gathered together, and it was so ; and God saw that it was good.” But the picture I made of the scene was vast, dreary, and uncertain, as the waters of the lake seem to be on the edge of a wild winter night, with not a touch of beauty or blessing about it. Just then, the children came running to me with a treasure they had found in the sand. It was a small shell of exquisite beauty, bedded in a piece of limestone. It was a sermon in a stone. For it said to me, “I was born in the time you have just made so dreary. I was no more to that for which I was made than the garment is for your child. Yet you can see how beautiful I must have been, and then

guess what blessing past your understanding was present in the world you have made so dark. Look at me, and repent of your incipient atheism, and believe that wherever there is life, let it be ever so mean and poor, there also is God. The whole round world, with all its life, is touched in some way by his shadow and his light."

## XIII.

*The Hither Side.*

Exodus xxxiii. 18, 20: "And Moses said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. . . . And the Lord said, There shall no man see me, and live."

My text contains two things,—the desire of the man, and the answer of God. The desire of the man is for a full revelation of providence and grace from this side of his life,—from a starting-point: the answer of God is, that cannot be, because, if such a revelation was made, it would destroy the life itself.

Moses had been hidden away in the recesses of Midian, forty years, quietly feeding his flock and his family. He expected, doubtless, to die, as he had long lived, a shepherd. But the Divine Providence had marked out a very different path for him; and so he found himself compelled to come out of his rest, and head the great exodus of his kinsmen from Egypt. At the time when he uttered this prayer, a part of his work was done; but the hardest task was before him. The multitude was there; but it was a vast, uncouth mass of humanity, debased by the curse of slavery, under which it had long groaned; and depended on him as a babe depends on its mother, for the future. Moses feels what a deep responsibility rests upon him,—how fearfully he must fail if this movement is a failure, and what a glory will rest on his success if he succeeds. The solemn issue fills his heart with a great longing to know what it will be. So, with the simple trust of a man who believes that this issue is already as good as settled in the counsels of the Eternal, he cries, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

And I have taken the text, because it seems to me that this is always the longing of the responsible human soul, conscious that this life is welded into that which is to come. It is true

that there are men who contrive to live on a semi-animal plane, who never feel this hunger to know the secret of the glory of life and God; but that is because the soul is dormant, curled in upon itself. And so, on the other hand, there are a few who have come to where this man stood forty years after, when he was on the mountain alone; the wilderness behind him, the land of promise before; and he rested at last with God,—men who sweep such mighty spaces in the spiritual heavens, and yet feel such a nearness to God on earth and in life, that they are satisfied: they have seen the Father, and it sufficeth them. But many of us, I trust, are not down so low as the lowest of those; and I know that most of us are not yet lifted into that great place with the highest. We are simply where this man was when he uttered his prayer,—at the hither side of what we are to do and to be. Life stretches out into the dim distance before us; and we feel that God is with us, though we cannot see him; that our life in the future is in his hand, while we cannot know what it will bring. We know that the cloud certainly has a silver lining; but the dark side is what turns most frequently toward us, and we long so much to see the silver. We say in our hearts, “If I could but grasp this idea of what I am and what I may be, my real relation to this life and to God, in all its fulness,—then, I think, there would be such an ever-present radiance with me, that I could never doubt, or grow weary. My life would rise and swell into such full confidence as is only known to those that dwell where the Lord God is the light. I beseech thee, show me thy glory.”

The young man in some way utters this cry as he enters upon his separate and responsible life, if he has any fair comprehension of what it is to be a man. In New England, you shall watch him, a child in his home,—a tiny fragment of mirth and mischief, no more conscious of or caring for the future than the bird that pours out its song in the old apple-tree fast by his chamber window. But the years sweep on in their wonderful, silent certainty. Childhood opens into youth. The school and college set their mark on his forehead, and he stands at last on the verge of his manhood, in that first prime,

beautiful in the innocent as the first bloom on the grape. Watch him then : he can no more stay in the old home, than Noah could stay in the old ark, when he knew the earth was blossoming and waiting for him after the Flood. But, as he longs to go,—I speak from my own experience,—there are moments when this hunger for some revelation of what his life will be grows almost into a pain ; when he feels that one flash, clear through, would be worth a year of living. It is then that his soul wrestles with God, cries out to him, “ I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” Let me see whether I shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, or a mere stick left in the sand by the receding tide.

The young man and maiden stand with their hands clasped together, looking onward to that time, when the revelation they have made each to the other shall be made openly to the world, and they shall be, for ever after, man and wife. It is a wonder of happiness, as they stand there and look through the golden gates, down the long vista, from this first prime to that day when they shall be old and gray-headed, and gather up their feet and die. But then, after that, comes the longing to know what this life they are to live will be. It is with them as it was with the man Moses : the very sacredness of this life to come makes them anxious about its unfolding. “ What if I should fail to be what I now seem to be ? If poverty should come in at the door, and love fly out at the window ? If one of us should die, or if any way this fair morning should bring a noon of black cloud-banks and a night of storm and sorrow ? In doubling my chances of blessedness, I am doubling my chances of wretchedness. The divine balances never kick the beam.” It is when the man and woman feel so deeply this meaning that these questionings come ; and, as they rise and press on the soul, they are this cry of the man to God, “ I beseech thee, show me thy glory.”

Life sweeps on again, and the father and mother bend over their first-born ; that wonderful new testament from God out of heaven, the holiest and most beautiful thing to them this world ever held. They watch it as the lights and shadows ripple over the face, and the smile comes and goes that has so

constantly suggested the nearer presence of the angels ; and, as they watch, they wonder what will be the fruitage of this folded soul. Here is a life with them and theirs that can never end.

“The little lids now folded fast,—  
They must learn to drop at last  
Our bitter, burning tears ;  
That small, frail being, singly stand  
At God’s right hand,  
Lifting up those sleeping eyes,  
Dilated with great destinies.”

They have the power, in their measure, to mould this life into the image of God, or to brand it with the mark of the beast ; and the awfulness of their trust rises before them, as the future of Israel rose before Moses in the wilderness. Father, mother, child, they can never be separate. First it was one life, then two ; now three mingle together, never again to be severed, father, mother, and child, now and for ever. No wonder that they long to know what will be the destiny of their trust,—the glory of God in this gift that he has sent them. If they could see that, they could live for ever content ; and, with one heart and voice, they cry, “We beseech thee, show us thy glory.”

There are those, again, who feel after this revelation upon their common life. There is a school of writers and thinkers, —at the head of which, in his lifetime, stood Mr. Thackeray, —who, getting on into middle life, are led to cry out mournfully, that life has lost its glow and glory,—has settled into a jog-trot joylessness ; that their poetry sounds just like prose, and commonplace is written over the portals of every day.

Yet these men will never tire of telling you what life used to be when they were young, what it was to find the first bird’s-nest and snow-drop in the spring, to go on summer picnics, to have the first sleigh-ride, to keep Thanksgiving in the old home, to receive certain letters, and to enter a certain parlor. Nay, in more tender moods, they can tell you what it was to kneel down before our Father, and have no more doubt of his listening than they had of the mother’s listening, on whose knees their hands were resting, of a time when they

believed heaven was only a little ways out through the blue, and the sister, who had gone, looked and talked precisely as she had done on earth. But now they wear their rue with a difference. This bloom has gone, and they hold on for sheer duty. They find that their life has twisted itself into others past all unloosing. They cannot choose not to be what they are. "To be, or not to be," is not the question. They must be, and be steady and strong too, for the sake of others, if for nothing else. But what a difference would come to their living, if with that life in their youth, that was fresh every morning and renewed every evening, they could mingle this experience of their age, that seems to have driven it out! and that longing, when it comes, is this cry, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

Finally, in these days the patriot watches for a revelation of this glory on the nation. Inevitable, irresistible as the sweep of a planet, the mighty storm of war has smitten us,—routed us out of our old resting-places; and God has said to us, as he said to Moses, "Get thee out, thou and thy people." Surely this old Hebrew did not strive harder than we have done to stay where he was; not to go out at the bidding of the Lord; to be quiet, and let an infernal institution alone; to hold on to our mutton, and milk, and wool. But it is the everlasting alternative set before every great people,—the Red Sea and the wilderness, a baptism of fear and fire; then absolute obedience to God, and then at last victory, and the rest that remains,—or a peace purchased at a price that would make us a by-word and a hissing among the nations, and our future a blackness of darkness for ever. Thank God that we have known the day of our visitation, have found that we can only be in the line of providence through the Red Sea and the wilderness. But then the tremendous interests at stake touch us with this longing to know what is finally to come of it. The cry comes up to God from the nation, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

And so it is everywhere with the deeper heart: always we want to see the other from the hither side. Wherever a young man has left his home, to enter the battle of life; or a young

man and maiden have said the most sacred word we ever say to each other ; or a father and mother look into the face of their first-born ; or a weary man holds on steady and true, not so much for himself, as for others ; or the patriot looks wistfully at the great multitude heaving and struggling, with the thunder of Sinai above, the great desert before, and the promised land only in the far distance,—this to me is the interpretation of that cry out of the soul, “ I beseech thee, show me thy glory.”

Now to all this comes the answer of God : “ This cannot be, for that would be death. Such a revelation as you are crying for, instead of being the inspiration, would be the destruction, of the life I have given you.”

And I conceive a possible answer in the nature of the thing itself. Is it so universal, this mist on the track ? Then it must be right. I might make sure of that, without any appeal, except to common human sense, and grace. The old pious conclusion, that what is universal must be best, is as good here as anywhere. It cannot be, that corn and trees are, as a rule, all right ; and men and women, all wrong. If it were better that we should see clear through, from the hither to the other side, then to see would be the rule ; and only not to see, the exception. No doctrine can be more divine, did we know it, than this of the fitness of things,—the essential harmony of the world and life with some vast purpose of the Maker. God is righteous (*right wise*) in all his ways. I do not envy either the philosophy or the faith, that can give evil such a dreadful advantage over good, as to concede to it any power beyond what pleases God. And no dilemma in the doctrine that this is the best possible world, can ever be so cruel as that which follows for ever, steady as its own shadow, the doctrine that it is the worst.

Then really, this is the way in which I act toward my own children. I never tell them all the secrets of my intention toward them, because a certain instinct I can never overpass tells me some reserve is better. If my son should come to me, as he started out in life, and say, “ Father, I want to know the



uttermost you mean to do for me under any circumstances; then, when I know how good you are, I shall not only be more content, but what I do will be done with more inspiration. I shall love you more, and serve you better, because you are so generous." I should count it a great misfortune to have the lad talk like that; and if I did so reveal all my purposes, and he should be ever so dutiful, I could never be sure that this was not dictated quite as much by the greed of what was to come, as by the love that springs out of our relation as father and son,—what I am now to him, and what he is to me; and so the whole tenor of his life after that, in the shy springs and roots of it, would seem to be touched with the chill of death.

Then it is grander and holier not to know, yet to be high and pure all the same, walking by faith, not by sight.

What makes the difference in our estimate of the first captain that ever sailed to these shores, and the man who brings his ship into port this morning? To the one, the reverence of all men will be given; but, to the other, hardly a second thought. The difference is this, of seeing and not seeing. The one starts on his dim and perilous way, breaking through league after league of trackless waters, and through the doubt and fear that is all about him in the ship. He has not received the promise, has not really seen it afar off; but it is no matter: the man holds fast to the hope set before him; and that keeps him steady, until at last his quest is found. But the captain who enters the harbour this morning knows what Columbus only believed. He has seen the end, as far as mortal can see that from the hither side. At noon or night, whenever he would look westward, here was the land standing in the sun; it was all plain sailing, well done by a common man, without any deep emotion, or struggle or victory, except over wind and storm.

But, once more, there is stronger reason in the fact, that what the man cries out for is not so much something to see, as something to be; and, until he is one with the glory, he cannot see it. There is a wonderful suggestiveness in this story, when you get at the heart of it. From the time the cry is uttered, forty years come and go, bringing ever new labor, and mostly sorrow. Now he seems to be going backward, now forward; from the

sea to the Jordan, from the Jordan to the sea. Working, watching, weeping, praying, but never utterly broken down, he becomes at last an intimate part of the glory he longed for. Then he does not ask for the revelation he cannot choose, but have it because he is in it.

Now, friend, does life go hard with you, and this longing come painfully over you, consider whether this may not also be your experience. What moment is the highest in the life of the Master? Is it when the angels come, or when the voice is heard out of the cloud; or when multitudes following him, shouting "Hosanna;" or when great floods of life pour from him to refresh the faint and sick and broken-hearted? Believe me, not one of these, but that moment when, in all the universe, he felt he was alone; that even God had forsaken him; and yet was equal to the dreadful demand, and led captivity captive.

The solution of the problem turns on one thing only. As I stand here, looking wistfully onward, longing for the light, crying for the glory, am I able to step out in time with what is demanded of me as a man? When I have answered that question, I have answered all. God will see to the rest. There can be no fear but my life will pass into the ever-nearing glory; and in the fulness of time, I am sure to receive the full revelation.

Here we are as the earth in the winter, and we cry out for the summer. Did you ever think how certainly the summer comes? The earth wheels onward through the awful spaces. We might imagine she would get adrift, or not set herself to the time, and so we might lose our summer. But steadily she turns to the sun when her time comes, and the glory breaks upon her, according to the promise. So at last she comes down from God, out of heaven, like a bride adorned for her wedding.

I get sick sometimes at my poor, halting faith, as I see how constantly God will remind me of the certainty of his presence; how even inanimate nature, as I call it, thrills and pulses with this ever present helpfulness toward the glory that shall be revealed. As I did some little matter among my

plants yesterday, I noticed, when one delicate shoot seemed to suffer from the sun, a leaf on the same stem came over, and covered it a little with its shadow. I tried to turn it back ; but there was no shadow of turning. I could break it or fetter it, or inflict some other outrage on it ; but I could not alter its will to succour that mite of a bud, and defend it from the sun ; because it was as the wing of an angel, and its law and order as deep and sure as the law that holds the planets in their mighty harmony. Then, as I saw this, I said in my heart, "O my Father ! let me learn from this leaf, if I will not be taught by thy Spirit, how the whole creation witnesses to the certainty of the coming glory. Surely if in this blind, dumb thing, there can be such faithfulness to the flowering ; if this leaf can be as an angel, to guard and shelter the one purpose,—how much more shall I find, that the man, the most perfect flower of God, is guarded and guided, through the dark night and the fierce noon, to the full time when he shall unfold to the eternal beauty to which he was destined in his creation. For—

"There's not a flower can grow upon the earth,  
 Without a flower upon the spiritual side :  
 All that we see is pattern of what shall be in the mount,  
 Related royally, and built up to eterne significance.  
 There's nothing small :  
 No fly, muffled hum of summer bee,  
 But finds its coupling in the spinning stars ;  
 No pebble at your foot but proves a sphere ;  
 No chaffinch but implies a cherubim.  
 Earth is full of heaven,  
 And every common bush a fire with God."

Young man, standing on the hither side, ready to start, and wondering what glory life will bring, believe me, it will bring all you can possibly use or deserve, in God's own good time. What is most essential as you stand there is, that you put heart and life into an honest and high endeavor. Trust in God as Moses did, let the way be ever so dark, and it shall come to pass that your life at last shall surpass even your longing ; not, it may be, in the line of that longing, that shall be as it pleases God, but the glory is as sure as the grace ; and the most ancient heavens are not more sure than that.

Man and woman, standing in the presence of your first true love, do not fear any thing that love can bring. Passion might fly out of the window when poverty comes in at the door; but love will stand by you while life holds on, and then it will plume its wings, and go with you into the eternal life.

Father and mother, longing to know what your babe will be, it is most likely, if you did know, the very knowledge would interfere fatally with the divine intention. Only Mary seems to have *known* any thing about the glory, that like a star shone on the cradle of her son; and she could not understand it any more than the rest. You would be so appalled at the way he must go, the Sinai and the wilderness, the sorrow and pain; or so blinded by the glory that will come when he has taken his own place,—that, in either case, you would be totally unfit for the simple duties and cares, small and poor as they would then seem, on which every thing under God depends.

Man in middle life, to whom life is hard and dry, whose cry is sometimes, "O that I had wings like a dove! then would I flee away, and be at rest,"—I doubt very seriously whether fleeing would do it. When Bierstadt wanted to get the glory of the Yo Semite into his canvas, he did not retire to his chamber and read about it, reclining on velvet and sipping nectar; but went out, over the plains, through the wilderness, through hardship and danger, into the heart of the glory: and watched and waited, day after day, if he might but see the skirts of the robe in which it was clad. And lo! he saw the glory; and it folded him in and was all about him, like the breath of life.

It is so that we must come to the sense of the deepness of the blessing of the life we live. Go into the heart of it, at whatever labor and pain: enter mightily into its duties; watch not for its shadow alone, as these complainers do, but most of all for its light, and it shall come to pass, that you shall find at last in your hearts what the painter found at last in his canvass as much glory as will fill them full of a radiance that will bless wherever it shines.

Patriot, watching for the redemption of the nation from its fetters and sins,—I bid you remember, that, in this old history,

one thing is exalted above all. It is not the power of David, the glory of Solomon, the reformation of Samuel or Nehemiah : it is this forty years' struggle through the wilderness, to which all look back in the after-time as the period when God came nearest, and his glory shone most gloriously ; of which the very relics were kept most religiously, and the most awful days became national holidays. We may well thank God, and take courage, and march on, when we know that the pillars of cloud by day and of fire by night are set fast in the divine order, to guide us on the way. Perfect peace *will* come at last, and order and joy ; and the glory has come through the thick darkness already when we rest in the promise of God. Let us all be sure, that all is well whatever comes, while we trust, and stand fast, and strive ; and only hopeless, and rightly hopeless, when we want what we are in no wise willing to earn. The glory and glow of life come by right living ; for in that " we all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord."

## XIV.

*The Book of Psalms.*

LUKE XX. 42 : "The Book of Psalms."

THE Book of Psalms, and not the Psalms of David, is the most appropriate title. David is the author of a good many of the pieces ; but he is only one of ten or perhaps twelve authors, who have a share in the entire collection. The particular process by which the book came to assume its present form has passed out of all memory and history. It is probable, that long ago there were at least five collections of Psalms, and that they were finally all brought together, and cast into one, very much as our collections of Hymns for the church service are made now. The Masorah, school of criticism among the Jews,—one object of which was to keep a jealous eye on the outward letter of their Bible, to count the books,

words, and even letters of which it is composed,—has preserved the division lines of those minor books of Psalms. The same thing has been done in the Syriac Version, a very old translation from the Hebrew. It is also probable, that the editor had the trouble such men have now. St. Athanasius has preserved the tradition, that the present selection of one hundred and fifty was made out of three thousand Psalms, that were at that time getting themselves said and sung on the hills and in the valleys of old Jewry; from which we may infer, that bad verse and pretended inspiration is by no means the result of modern degeneracy. Who this devoted man was, is not at all certain: some say Hezekiah; some, Ezra. Others say that it must have been an unknown man of a later time, as some of the Psalms bear marks of having been written as late as the age of the Maccabees, or about one hundred and fifty years before Christ, and two hundred and fifty after the last of the Prophets. The Jews themselves assert that the 92nd Psalm was written by Adam; the 89th by Abraham; the 110th by Melchizedek; the 90th and ten following, by Moses. Seventy-one are given to David, (some manuscripts give him eighty-two); the 72d and 127th, to Solomon; and the rest to writers whose names you will not care to know.

This classification, however, will not bear criticism: the text itself, in some of the Psalms, makes it impossible. For instance, the Psalm attributed to Abraham makes frequent mention of David. Other and better systems, in later times, keep these elder men out of the book entirely, and make Moses the oldest writer whose poems are admitted. This is probably true, or as near as we shall ever be to the truth on this matter. Moses, David, Solomon, and seven obscurer men, answer to our call, when we say who are the authors of the Book of Psalms.

Then to come to the inner structure of the book, we may perceive that this editor has only been moderately careful in the performance of his task. There is, to be sure, a rough sort of harmony in which David has a section to himself. Then David has a share of a section with Asaph; then Asaph and others join at a third; and the fourth and fifth are by authors

whose names are not known. But, by some strange oversight the Psalms 14th and 53d are almost exactly alike : with the exception of a few words in one verse, they *are* the same Psalms. The last five verses of Psalm 40th are precisely the same as the five verses that compose Psalm 70th. Psalm 18th is the same as the 22d chapter of the second book of Samuel ; while the 144th Psalm is made up out of a mosaic of verses, selected from the 8th, 18th, 39th, 102d, and some other Psalms,—the 8th and 11th verses of this Psalm being also the same verse repeated, and the whole composition standing without any perceptible harmony of verse to verse, or any relation of ideas each to the other.

Then, again, a number of the Psalms are written as you would write an acrostic : each verse begins with a particular letter of the Hebrew alphabet, from the first to the last. The long Psalm 119th is one of those, except that in the monkish division of the Bible, the alphabetic section is subdivided into eight verses. The 145th Psalm is another in which the acrostic form has been broken up by one verse being lost,—that is, the one set to the fifteenth letter,—but restored from some old manuscript since our common version got to be canonized. Finally, one or two other Psalms are the substantial repetition of the one thing, that any two versions of a poem from the French or German would be, when it was rendered into our own tongue. This is the outward frame-work of the book, as it stands, subjected to the honest eye-sight we give to any other book,—a selection of sacred poems, from a great mass, written during a range of years that would include the reign of Alfred the Great and the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, containing marks of carelessness that would ruin the reputation of any editor in our own time ; with no particular certainty about the authorship, or when the book was collected, or who did it, or when men pronounced it of such divine authority, or who authorized them to do so, and whether some of the best among the two thousand eight hundred and fifty rejected Psalms ought not to have been retained, at any rate in preference to those that are twice printed.

Now, then, here is a most interesting study : all nations

have grown into poetry as soon as they began to grow into anything above the commonest life of the moment. But this book of poems has taken its place easily and beautifully before and over the home-poems of the foremost nations on the globe. The Greek, by comparison, has forgotten his Homer and Hesiod; the Roman, those first poetic utterances out of which Livy and those that followed him drew their material for the beginnings of the history of that marvellous commonwealth. The sagas of Scandinavia, and the sacred hymns of the Druids, have all gone into night. The psalms are lost that sounded through the temple-services and palaces and cottages of Egypt and Assyria. Even where the sacred poem is left, the meaning is dead, or all but dead, whether it be to the disciple of Buddha or Mahomet; while here is a book of poems, some of which are probably as old as the oldest of those that are dying or dead, as fresh and welcome as ever. If I could have stood here this morning, and, instead of my sermon, could have told you that I had come into the possession of a wonderful and curious literary treasure, that had been sent to me, say from China,—a book written from two to three thousand years ago,—a book of poems by different authors, ranging through a period of a thousand years, in which there are to be found the most vivid pictures of life in that old time; the writers, with the simplicity of children, letting you look into their hearts, so that by looking, you learn their innermost experiences of hope and fear, sorrow and joy, struggle, defeat, and victory, their thoughts of life and death in its almost infinite differences to different men: and all this not as a description of a life they *stand and look at*, but a life in which they themselves are at once actors and spokesmen, as much as if Tennyson had been in the charge of the Light Brigade, or the foremost actor in the French Revolution had written the *Marsellaise*. That ever since those poems were written, they had exerted the most wonderful power over the human heart,—great armies had stood barehead to sing some of them before great battles, and knelt down to repeat others after great victories,—some filling out the aspirations of the loftiest and the holiest minds with words as pure as their purest thought; others expressing the



deepest penitence of the most degraded,—alike welcome to the greatest king and the poorest beggars,—if I could tell you this, there would be but one thought in this church. Not one of you but would say, “Above all books, I desire to see that, and to get at the heart of it.”

And if I should say to you, “Tell me what, in your estimation, is the one word that will best express the quality which has made this book what it is to all those different men and times,” you would answer, “That word is *inspiration*: the poems that can be what you describe are inspired, and so are fountains of inspiration for that reason.” And then, if I should say to you, “How can you be sure of this? We cannot tell certainly who wrote them; we cannot tell when they were collected; no man can put his finger upon the time or place when the book was first said to be inspired; it is badly put together; some poems come in twice, and others bear marks of the most mechanical verse-grinding.” Your answer would be, “This is all no matter. We should love to know who were the authors; but they would gather lustre from the poems, not the poems from them. It is no matter when they were collected; the fact *that* they *were* collected, and staid so, is the most significant; and, if two thousand and five hundred years ago, the most notable men in Jewry had written in letters of gold that they were inspired, and the tablet were still to be seen among the treasures of the Vatican, that were nothing to this seal that has been set to their inspiration by untold millions of the race.” Here, then, is the first principle in the inspiration and worth of the Book of Psalms to you and me. Whatever value we may set upon it, there is that property in it which I have illustrated in my ideal book from China,—perennial life and universal adaptation. Here are the very words that have sounded over the wild tumult of the battle, and dropped lovingly from the heart of the mother bending over her first-born, hushing it to rest, that are still unexhausted before the mightiest power of organ and choir, and yet have easily folded themselves to the measure of a broken voice on a death-bed,—a blessing of inspired utterance which Bacon and Milton and Cowper and Burns loved to set to the measures of our sweet English tongue, and at which no

sincere heart ever came to drink, and went away weary and unrefreshed ; because they came right out of the human soul, and go straight and fast as light, and high as God.

I do not forget, of course, in this discussion, that there are in this book the vindictive Psalms that have so sorely puzzled those that want to measure the Bible's inspiration by mechanical rule, and stand appalled, therefore, before the terrible fury of that sentence : " Happy shall he be that taketh thy little ones, and dasheth them against the stones ;" or this,—“ As for those that compass me about, let burning coals fall upon them ; let them be cast into the fire, into deep pits, from which they cannot rise ;” or this, “ My enemy has rewarded me evil for good, and given me hatred for my love ; therefore let his prayer become sin ; let his children be fatherless and beggars and vagabonds for ever ; let there be none that will have mercy upon him, or upon his fatherless children ; let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered ; let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.” Now, there are some that say, “ These Psalms are a great mystery.” And they try to explain them by saying, “ The writer was a good man : therefore he could not, at the moment when he wrote these sentences, be personally under the influence of those feelings ; else he could not, on the other hand, be inspired of God. We judge, therefore, that he uttered these words as a prophetic foresight of what these men *would* come to, and not what he wished they *might* come to.” I have searched through all sorts of books to find what this class of minds have to offer in explanation of these awful curses ; and this is the best that I can find,—the best, I believe, that has ever been written. The reply to the whole matter is very short. We say, friends, you have a right to your own opinions ; but on the face of these Psalms, there is but one meaning to plain men ; and that is, that they are stout, solid, compact cursing ; a man cursing a man,—and that is the truth. You have every right to try to explain them away ; but it is like biting a file, at once useless, and destructive of a precious gift of God. Your trouble rises out of your claim of entire inspiration of the divine, holy spirit through the whole book. We have no such trouble, because we make no

such claim. We claim the holy spirit inspired what is holy and pure and tender and true, beautiful and good, and manly and womanly : but if there is a part of the book hard, unmerciful, vindictive or ungodly, on the plain, wholesome interpretation of those terms as we live by them, then the holy spirit did not inspire that, but the unholy spirit ; and, if you want scripture, I repeat for you those words of the disciple, " Beloved, believe not every spirit ; but try the spirits whether they be of God." It is a most painful instance of the sad result of consenting to be fettered by the hard rules of a system, in the interpretation of that book which, of all others asks for a clear eye and a free soul, that the man who would laugh in your face if you told him that the same spirit inspired Burns to write his " Cotter's Saturday Night," and another poem which I must not even mention, dare not question whether the same spirit inspired the 109th Psalm and the 12th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. To be frank however, it is but right to say, that there are conceivable conditions in life, when these imprecations become natural ; when the poor humanity, hunted and driven into a very insanity of desperation, will take to this as the last effort at self-defence or vengeance. I could think of that slave-woman, in the old bad time, who murdered her children to prevent them from being carried back to their doom, using exactly such words ; but what is the true inspiration of such fearful moments, has been set in a fastness of light for all to see. When one had been betrayed, condemned in the face of all justice, scourged, blinded, mocked, smitten, spit upon, and crucified, he cried, " Father, forgive them : they know not what they do."

But, again, I say it is not for the faults or deformities of this book, but for its intrinsic beauty and truth, that the human heart is faithful to it, and loves it with such an enduring love. One great strain runs through almost every poem ; namely, that this material universe, and this world and life, is not the mere cunning performance of a great upholsterer, but the actual expression of God. Written before men knew much about material laws, it is steady to the grand idea that God himself is the Law ; so that whatever of terror

or sublimity or beauty could be seen in nature, whatever of light and darkness in life, was interlinked with the presence and power of the divine spirit. Then, what is more, and still another beauty in the book, is, these ideas had been on fire in that human soul out of which the Psalm sprang. They had made the man sing; and this is the result of his singing, set to a music that is all aflame with the beauty and salt of truth. Travellers tell us what a deep meaning these poems gather, when you come to stand in the very scenes where they were written. The great multitude, for instance, on some day of high worship, stand in the portico of the temple, and witness a thunder-storm come sweeping up from the Mediterranean. It strikes Lebanon, and the cedars bend and break in the tempest. It drives down the sides of Hermon, roars through the wilderness, and, at last, breaks over Jerusalem in great torrents of rain. Then the sun comes out again, and all is still. But out of that thunder-storm there has come a Psalm: the mantle of inspiration has fallen on one in the multitude, and the 29th Psalm pours from his heart,—not as men sing of the storm now; for to him God informs and fills the storm: “The voice of the Lord is on the sea; the God of glory thundereth; the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; the voice of the Lord divideth the fire; the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord will give strength to his people, and bless them with peace.” The man quivers with this sense of the presence of God, and the quiver is in the poem too. The poet-shepherd follows his flock, guides them, defends them, seeks out new pastures, takes them through the grim passes where the wild beast lurks,—the valley of the shadow of death; he never for a moment fails of his care over them; and so, at last, on some high day of the soul,—perhaps after he has had a hard time, defending and seeing to his charge,—he fills with a great sense of his own relation to God, of dependence upon one above *him*, as he is above the flock; and the one spark has lighted up the whole beauty of the analogy: “The Lord is *my* shepherd: I shall not want. He maketh *me* to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth *me*

beside the still waters. Yea, though *I* walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. I am defended : my Shepherd has a rod and a staff. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow *me* all the days of *my* life." And I wish I had room to notice a number more of those word-paintings, where some piece of life is at once made to shine out from the old, dim past, and is filled with the presence of God. There is the grand picture of a storm at sea ; the touching sketch of the captives sitting under the willows on the banks of the Euphrates ; and the sad wail of the poet,—far from the temple and its services, envying even the sparrow and swallow building about the capitals,—for the rest which he could never find, until he should meet again with the old familiar faces, and mingle in the services,—a sort of lamentation that I observe poets seldom fall into any more, and as seldom into the services out of which it sprung. And so it comes to pass, because these men possessed these two great gifts,—first, that intense sympathy and oneness with what they describe, which makes their description an immortal, spiritual photograph ; and, second, that wonderful realization of the direct presence and agency of God, by which they are able to say "I and we," where even Milton can only say "he and they." The best of those Psalms have for ever been, and perhaps will for ever be, abreast of every new man that comes into the world. They are nature and divinity set to music,—to a perfect, natural music,—the key of which we bring into the world when we come. They will only die out, and be forgotten, when man ceases to wrestle and stagger under his burden, or to exult and clap his hands in his great moments of victory.

We shall for ever gather new insight into the laws of nature ; but, if we are imbued with the spirit of the Psalms, we shall never cease to hear the voice of God in the clang of the sea booming among the rocks ; to see him in the light of the morning when the sun riseth,—the fair morning without clouds, with the tender grass springing out of the earth by the clear shining after rain. We shall measure the courses of the stars, and discover their great secrets more and more clearly in

the ever-growing ages ; but no attainment will ever carry us above that grand utterance. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. The sun rejoices as a strong man to run a race, and there is nothing hid from his power." And men will for ever say, "I laid me down, and slept ; for the Lord sustained me." And they will never forget to cry, "In the time when I am old and gray-headed, O God ! do not forsake me." And, "As the hart panteth after the water-brook, even so panteth my soul after God," and, while there is danger, they will cry, "Keep me as the apple of thine eye ; hide me under the shadow of thy wing ;" while there is deliverance, men will tell how God "bowed the heavens, and came down," and "redeemed the souls of his servants, so that none of them that trusted in him were desolate." And, while ever there is death, there will be men who will be sure to sing, "My heart is glad, for thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, nor suffer thine holy one to see corruption : therefore, I will rest in hope. Thou wilt show me the path of life. I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness."

And so I think it will be for ever with this book, studded all over with living sentences set to the music of living souls. The vindictive Psalms will die out ; we shall put them aside. They were the outpourings of hearts made savage by oppression in a savage time. They are nothing to us, or we to them. We could do better without them to-day. We can afford to have two psalms exactly alike, as we could afford to have two copies of the song, "To Mary in Heaven," in the same book. None of these things can trouble us, when we come with a sweet, wholesome frankness to this great book, and enter into the spirit and power of its utterances, wherever they chord with the longings and aspirations of the soul.

## XV.

*The Battle-field of Fort Donelson.*

Narrative Sermon, delivered March 2, 1862.

I PROPOSE to speak to you this morning about the battle-field of Fort Donelson,—of those that are alive and well there, those that are wounded and sick, and those that are dead. I do this because the subject fills my heart and mind above all others at this time ; because you have a right to expect your pastor to tell you what reason justified him in leaving your church vacant last Sunday, without asking your permission ; because I know nothing can be of so much interest to you as the story of my week's experience ; and, finally, because the thing itself teaches the real divinity and gospel of the time.

It was natural, when the news was flashed into our city, that the great battle, as fierce, for the number engaged in it, and as protracted as Waterloo, was turned into a transcendent victory ; and when bells were ringing, banners waving, men shaking hands everywhere, and breaking into a laughter that ended in tears, and into tears that ended in laughter,—that we should all remember that this victory had been won at a terrible price ; and that those bells, so jubilant to us, would be remembered by many a wife as the knell that told her she was a widow, by Rachels weeping for their children, and by desolate Davids uttering the old bitter cry, “ Would to God I had died for thee, my son, my son ! ”

And it was natural, too, that we should remember, that there, on that battle-field, must be vast numbers, friends, and foes, alike suffering great agonies, which we could do some small thing to mitigate, if we could only get there with such medicines and surgery, refreshment and sympathy, as God had poured into the bosom of our great city, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.

Sydney Smith has said that there would be a great many more good Samaritans in the world than there are, if we could be good Samaritans without the oil and the two pence. He

might have said that there *are* a great many who give the oil and the two pence as gladly and readily as their great parabolic prototype; and it was a fine illustration of the sort of life we live almost unconsciously in these distant centres of a new civilization, that a great meeting should gather itself together without effort, provide the oil and the two pence in a wonderful plenty, find a great company of surgeons and others ready to leave every sort of indispensable work that they could not possibly have left the day before, and see them away on the very first train that started in the direction of the battle-field after we got the news of the victory.

Let me here point out the striking fact in our human nature, that while we are constantly inventing excuses why we will not do this thing or that, and putting the yoke of oxen or the piece of land we have just bought, or the wife we have just married or are about to marry, in the way of all sorts of divine things, there comes some great sweeping sorrow or joy, with its consequent duty, once and again in our life, before which our excuse goes down like a wall of cards. We can resist the marriage-supper; but a city afire, a great victory that will tell on the fate of the nation for all time to come, our own child in a fever, or a man buried in a well just as we are going past, flames over all excuses to the soundhearted man or woman. God seems to deal with us at such moments as we deal with our children after a long perversity. He sets us down in some place with a touch we know it is impossible to resist; and seems to say to us, "Now, sir, stand just there, and do just so."

It seems a trifle to mention, and I would pass it over, if I thought that reading about it would give you the sense of it; but it was not so with me, and I suppose is not with the most of you. You go down Lake Street, over a deep, solid ice, take your seat in the cars, race over great, dreary reaches of snow-clad "prairie" and ice-bound waters, to step at last from the car into deep, soft mud, at the end of this wonderful iron road, and not a vestige of ice or snow is to be seen. It was the first time in my life that I got a clear realization of parallels of latitude. Our great desire, of course, was to get, to Fort



Donelson and to our work in the shortest possible time : and I am sure you will not thank me for a full account of Cairo, historical and descriptive. I will merely say, when you want to solicit a quiet place of retirement in the summer, do not even go to look at Cairo. I assure you, it will not suit. It is notable here only for being the first point where we met with traces of the great conflict. The first I saw were three or four of those long boxes, that hold only and always the same treasure ; these were shells nailed together by comrades in the camp, I suppose, to send some brave man home. As I went past one lying on the sidewalk in the dreary rain and mud, I read on a card the name of a gallant officer who had fallen in fight ; and, as I stood for a moment to look at it, the soldier who had attended it came up, together with the brother of the dead man, who had been sent for to meet the body. It seemed there was some doubt whether this might not be some other of the half-dozen who had been labelled at once ; and the coffin must be opened before it was taken away.

I glanced at the face of the living brother as he stood and gazed at the face of the dead ; but I must not desecrate that sight by a description. He was his brother beloved, and he was dead ; but he had fallen in a great battle, where treason bit the dust, and he was faithful unto death. He must have died instantly ; for the wound was in a mortal place, and there was not one line or furrow to tell of a long agony, but a look like a quiet child, which told how the old confidence of Hebrew David, "I shall be satisfied when I wake in Thy likeness," was verified in all the confusion of the battle. God's finger touched him, and he slept ; and—

"The great intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there."

One incident I remember, as we were detained at Cairo, that gave me a sense of how curiously the laughter and the tears of our lives are blended. I had hardly gone a square from that touching sight, when I came across a group of men

gathered round a soldier wounded in the head. Nothing would satisfy them but to see the hurt; and the man, with perfect good nature, removed the bandage. It was a bullet-wound, very near the centre of the forehead; and the man declared the ball had flattened and fallen off. "But," said a simple man eagerly, "why didn't the ball go into your head?"—"Sir," said the soldier proudly, "my head's too hard: a ball can't get through it!"

A journey of one hundred and sixty miles up the Ohio and Cumberland rivers brought us to Fort Donelson; and we got there at sunset. I went at once into the camp, and found there dear friends who used to sit in these pews, and had stood fast through all the thickest battle. They gave us coffee, which they drank as if it were nectar, and we as if it were senna.

A body of men drew up to see us, and demanded the inevitable "few remarks:" and we told them through our tears how proud and thankful they had made us, and what great tides of gladness had risen for them in our city, and wherever the tidings of victory had run; and how our hands gave but a feeble pressure, our voices but a feeble echo, of the mighty spirit that was everywhere reaching out to greet those that were safe, to comfort the suffering, and to sorrow for the dead.

The "own correspondents" of the newspapers describe Fort Donelson just as if a man should say that water is a fluid, or granite a solid. I have seen no printed description of it that will make a picture in the mind. I think there is a picture graven on some silent soul, that will get itself printed some time. But it took years to get a word-picture of Dunbar, and it may take as long to get one of Donelson. If you take a bow, and tighten the string until it is very much over bent, and lay it down on a table, with the string toward you, it will give a faint idea of the breast-works; the river being to them what the cord is to the bow. At the right hand corner, where the bow and cord join, is the famous water-battery, commanding a straight reach in the river of about a mile, where

the gunboats must come up ; and at the other end of the cord up the river, lies the town of Dover.

It was my good fortune to go over the entire ground with a number of our friends, and to wander here and there alone at rare moments beside. The day I spent there was like one of our sweetest May-days. As I stood in a bit of secluded woodland, in the still morning, the spring birds sang as sweetly, and flitted about as merrily, as if no tempest of fire and smoke and terror had ever driven them in mortal haste away. In one place where the battle had raged, I found a little bunch of sweet bergamot, that had just put out its brown-blue leaves, rejoicing in its first resurrection ; and a bed of daffodils, ready to unfold their golden robes to the sun : and the green grass in sunny places was fair to see. But where great woods had cast their shadows, the necessities of attack and defence had made one haggard and almost universal ruin,—trees cut down into all sorts of wild confusion, torn and splintered by cannon-ball, trampled by horses and men, and crushed under the heavy wheels of artillery. One sad wreck covered all.

Of course, it was not possible to cover all the ground, or to cut down all the trees. But here and there, where the defenders would sweep a pass, where our brave men must come, all was bared for the work of death ; and, where the battle had raged, the wreck was fearful.

Our ever-busy Mother Nature had already brought down great rains to wash the crimson stains from her bosom ; and it was only in some blanket cast under the bushes, or some loose garment taken from a wounded man, that these most fearful sights were to be seen. But all over the field were strewn the implements of death, with garments, harness, shot and shell, dead horses, and the resting-places of dead men. Almost a week had passed since the battle, and most of the dead were buried. We heard of twos and threes, and in one place of eleven, still lying where they fell ; and, as we rode down a lonely pass, we came to one waiting to be laid in the dust, and stopped for a moment to note the sad sight. Pray, look out from my eyes at him as he lies where he fell. You see by his garb that he is one of the rebel army ; and, by the peculiar

marks of that class, that he is a city rough. There is little about him to soften the grim picture that rises up before you, as he rests in perfect stillness by that fallen tree ; but there is a shawl, coarse and homely, that must have belonged to some woman ; and—

“His hands are folded on his breast :  
There is no other thing expressed,  
But long disquiet merged in rest.”

Will you still let me guide you through that scene as it comes up before me ? That long mound, with pieces of board here and there, is a grave ; and sixty-one of our brave fellows rest in it, side by side. Those pieces of board are the grave-stones, and the chisel is a black-lead pencil. The queer, straggling letters tell you that the common soldier has done this, to preserve, for a few days at least, the memory of one who used to go out with him on the dangerous picket-guard, and sit with him by the camp-fire, and whisper to him, as they lay side by side in the tent through the still winter night, the hope he had before him when the war was over, or the trust in this comrade if he fell. There you see one large board, and in a beautiful, flowing hand, “John Olver, Thirty-first Illinois :” and you wonder for a moment whether the man who has so tried to surpass the rest was nursed at the same breast with John Olver ; or whether John was a comrade, hearty and trusty beyond all price.

And you will observe that the dead are buried in companies, every man in his own company, side by side ; that the prisoners are sent out after the battle to bury their own dead ; but that our own men will not permit them to bury a fellow-soldier of the Union, but every man in this sacred cause is held sacred even for the grave.

And thus, on the crest of a hill, is the place where the dwellers in that little town have buried *their* dead since ever they came to live on the bank of the river. White marble and gray limestone and decayed wooden monuments tell who rests beneath. There stands a gray stone, cut with these home-made letters, that tell you how William N. Ross died on the 26th day of March, 1814, in the 26th year of his age ; and right

alongside are the graves, newly made, of men who died last week in a strife which no wild imagining of this native man ever conceived possible in that quiet spot. Here, in the midst of the cemetery, the rebel officers have pitched their tents ; for the place is one where a commander can see easily the greater part of the camp. Here is a tent where some woman has lived, for she has left a sewing machine and a small churn ; and not far away you see a hapless kitten shot dead ; and everywhere things that make you shudder, and fill you with sadness over the wreck and ruin of war.

Here you meet a man who has been in command, and stood fast ; and, when you say some simple word of praise to him in the name of all who love their country, he blushes and stammers like a woman, and tells you he tried to do his best ; and, when we get to Mound City, we shall find a man racked with pain, who will forget to suffer in telling how this brave man you have just spoken to not only stood by his own regiment in a fierce storm of shot, but, when he saw a regiment near his own giving back because their officers showed the white feather, rode up to the regiment, hurled a mighty curse at those who were giving back, stood fast by the men in the thickest fight, and saved them ; and, says the sick man with tears in his eyes, " I would rather be a private under him, than a captain under any other man."

I notice one feature in this camp, that I never saw before : the men do not swear and use profane words as they used to do. There is a little touch of seriousness about them. They are cheerful and hearty ; and, in a few days, they will mostly fall back into the old bad habit so painful to hear : but they have been too near to the tremendous verities of hell and heaven on that battle-field, to turn them into small change for everyday use just yet. They have taken the Eternal Name for common purposes a thousand times ; and we feel as if we could say with Paul, " The times of this ignorance God passed by." But on that fearful day, when judgment fires were all aflame, a voice said, " Be still, and know that I am God ;" and they are still under the shadow of that awful name.

Now, friends, I can give you these hints and incidents, and

many more if it were needful ; but you must still be left without a picture of the battle-field, and I must hasten to the work we want to do. The little town of Dover was full of sick and wounded ; and they, first of all, commanded our attention. I have seen too much of the soldier's life to expect much comfort for him ; but we found even less than I expected among those who were huddled together there. There was no adequate comfort of any kind : many were laid on the floor, most were entirely unprovided with a change of linen, and not one had any proper nourishment. What we carried with us was welcome beyond all price. The policy of our commanders was to remove all the wounded on steamboats to Paducah, Mound City, and other places on the rivers : and it was a part of my duty, with several other gentlemen acting as surgeons and nurses, to attend one hundred and fifty-eight wounded men from Fort Donelson to Mound City.

I may not judge harshly of what should be done in a time of war like this in the West : it is very easy to be unfair. I will simply tell you, that, had it not been for the things sent up by the Sanitary Commission in the way of linen, and things sent by our citizens in the way of nourishment, I see no possibility by which those wounded men could have been lifted out of their bloodstained woollen garments saturated with wet and mud ; or could have had any food and drink, except corn-mush, hard bread, and the turbid water of the river.

That long cabin of the steamboat is packed with wounded men, laid on each side, side by side, so close that you can hardly put one foot between the men to give them a drink or to cool their fearful hurts. Most of us have been hurt badly at some time in our life, and remember what tender and constant care we needed and got. If you will substitute a rather careless and clumsy man for the mother or wife who waited on you, and divide his time and attention among perhaps forty patients, you will be able to conceive something of what had been the condition of these poor travellers but for the Chicago Committee.

Here is one who has lost an arm, and there one who has lost a leg. This old man of sixty has been struck by a grape-shot,

and that boy of eighteen has been shot through the lung. Here a noble-looking man has lived through a fearful bullet-wound just over the eye; and that poor German, who could never talk English so as to be readily understood, has been hit in the mouth, and has lost all hope of talking, except by signs.

That man with a shattered foot talks in the old dialect I spoke when I was a child; and, when I answer him in his own tongue, the words touch him like a sovereign medicine.

The doctor comes to this young man, and says quietly, "I think, my boy, I shall have to take your arm off;" and he cries out in a great agony, "O dear doctor! do save my arm!" and the doctor tells him he will try a little longer; and, when he has gone, the poor fellow says to me, "What *shall* I do if I lose my arm! I have a poor old mother at home, and there is no one to do anything for her but me."

That man who has lost his arm is evidently sinking. As I lay wet linen on the poor stump, he tells me how "he has a wife and two children at home, and he has always tried to do right and to live a manly life." The good, simple heart is clearly trying to balance its accounts before it faces the great event which it feels to be not far distant. As I go past him, I see the face growing quieter; and at last good Mr. Williams, who has watched him to the end, tells me he put up his one hand, gently closed his own eyes, and then laid the hand across his breast, and died.

That boy in the corner, alone, suffers agony such as I may not tell. All day long, we hear his cries of pain through half the length of the boat; far into the night, the tide of anguish pours over him: but at last the pain is all gone; and he calls one of our number to him, and says, "I am going. I want you to please write a letter to my father: tell him I owe such a man two dollars and a half, and such a man owes me four dollars; and he must draw my pay, and keep it all for himself." Then he lay silently a little while, and, as the nurse wets his lips, said, "Oh, I should so like a drink out of my father's well!" and, in a moment, he had gone where angels gather immortality;—

"By Life's fair stream, fast by the throne of God."

And so all day long, with cooling water and soft linen, with morsels of food and sips of wine, with words of cheer and tender pity to every one, and most of all to those who were in the sorest need, we tried to do some small service for those that had done and suffered so much for us. Some are dead, and more will die ; and some will live, and be strong men again ; but I do not believe that one will forget our poor service in that terrible pain ; while to us there came such a reward in the work as not one of us ever felt before, and we all felt that it was but a small fragment of the debt we owed to the brave men who had given life itself for our sacred cause.

Two or three things came out of this journey to the battle-field, that gave me some new thoughts and realizations. And, first, in all honor, I realized more fully than you can do, that, in those victories of which Fort Donelson is the greatest, we have reached not only the turning-point, as we hope, of this dreadful war, but we have plucked the first fruits of our Western civilization. I am not here to question for one moment the spirit and courage of our brothers in the East : the shade of Winthrop, noblest and knightliest man, the peer of Arthur for truth, of Richard for courage, and of Sidney for gentleness, would rise up to rebuke me. Ball's Bluff was worse than Balaklava as a criminal blunder, and equal to it in every quality of steady, hopeless courage. America will never breed a true man who will not weep as he reads the story of those hapless Harvard boys, whose clear eyes looked out at death steadily to the last, and who scorned to flinch.

But here, on our own Western prairies and in our back woods, we have been raising a new generation of men, whose name we never mentioned, under new influences, whose bearing we did not understand ; and, the first time they could get a fair field and no favor, they sprang into the foremost soldiers in the land.

Good, elderly New-England ministers of our own faith have made it a point to speak, in Eastern conventions, of our hopeless struggle with the semi-savagery of these mighty wildernesses. My dear doctor, that boy of eighteen was born in the prairies, and went to meetings where you would have gone crazy with



the noise of the mighty prayers and psalms ; and he got the conversion which you do not believe in, and was a sort of Methodist or Baptist : but he stood like one of Napoleon's Old Guard through all the battle ; and, when he was shot down and could fight no longer, his mighty spirit dragged the broken tabernacle into the bushes, and there he prayed with all his might, not for himself, but that the God of battles would give us the victory. That rough-looking man was wounded twice with ghastly hurts, and twice went from the surgeon back to the fight ; and only gave up when the third shot crippled him beyond remedy.

"I saw those 'Iowa-Second' boys come on to charge the breastworks," said our friend Colonel Webster to us. "More than one regiment had been beaten back, and the fortunes of the day began to look very uncertain. They came on steadily, silently, through the storm of shot, closing up as their comrades fell : and without stopping to fire a single volley that might thin the ranks of the defenders, and make some gap by which they might pour into the fortress, they went down into the ditch, and clean over the defences ; and there they stayed in spite of all."

One quiet-looking officer saw his company sorely thinned in the beginning of the day ; and, that the cause might have one more arm, he took musket and ammunition from one who could use them no more, and fought at the head of his company, shot for shot, all day long : and, as a wounded soldier told me this through his pain, he added, "I tell you, sir, if that man ever runs for an office, I'll vote for him, sure."

Secondly, From all these experiences, I have got a fresh conviction of the great mystery of the shedding of blood for salvation. We have been accustomed, especially in Unitarian churches, to consider Paul's ideas about blood-shedding as the fruit of his education under a sacrificial Judaism ; and that, again, as a twin-sister of barbarism : but as I went over this battle-field, and thought on the dead heroes and of all they died for, I kept repeating over each one, "He gave his life a ransom for many ;" and I wondered, when I thought of how we had all gone astray as a people, and how inevitable this war

had become in consequence, as the final test of the two great antagonisms, whether it may not be true in our national affairs as in a more universal sense,—“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.” And so, by consequence, every true hero fallen in this struggle for the right is also a saviour to the nation and the race.

Finally, I came to feel a more tender pity for the deluded men on the other side, and a more unutterable hatred of that vile thing that has made them what they are. On all sides I found young men, with faces as sweet and ingenuous as the faces of our own children, as open to sympathy, and, according to their light, as ready to give all they had for their cause.

I felt like weeping to see children of our noble mother so bare and poor and sad ; to see their little villages, so different from those where the community is not tainted by the curse and proscription of human bondage ; and I felt, more deeply than ever before, how for the sake of those men, who in spite of all are our brothers, this horrible curse and delusion of slavery ought to be routed utterly out of the land.

## XVI.

## Ω m e g a .

GEN. iii. 9 : “Where art thou ?”

THIS question was put first to the first man, as it has been, and will be, to all his descendants. It was put to Adam as he was closing one cycle of his life, and opening another. The innocence of ignorance had left him, and the insight which for good or evil, always follows, had taken its place. The first man that ever did wrong, he was just then through his first wrong-doing; and it was with him as it has been with his children ever since: he was afraid to meet God with the sin on his soul.

This fact, in itself, would be food for the most pregnant meditation ; but there is another matter, I think, still better at this particular time. The man is just completing one cycle of his life, I said, and entering another. It was inevitable it should

be so, as the sunrise to-morrow. He tried to avoid it; but God would not let him avoid it. He never will. It would turn this earth into hell, if he did, right where we stand. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God:" it would be unspeakably more fearful not to fall into his hands,—to come to an end and a beginning with sin on the soul, and without the Holy Spirit to press that sin home painfully, and compel us to hide our faces for shame. I have heard preachers often try to make sin fearful by proclaiming a torture of fire for it; but the most fearful fire I ever heard of was one in which there was no torture; where a man had lain down on a lime-kiln, and the vapor had come up and destroyed all feeling, and then the fire; and, when morning came, what the fire had touched was charred bone, and the man never knew it,—never knew it, or he would have been saved.

And now, after these days of communion together,—some sad, and some joyful, but all, I trust, good,—we have come to an end and a beginning. When we meet again, it will be in another year. You have been busy, in these days, taking account of where you stand in your business. You will make very sure of that before you are through: it is right you should. "He that will not provide for his own household is worse than an infidel." Let all religious men remember, who let their affairs lie round loose, while others they count infidel keep things snug and true, that of the two, in Paul's estimation, the careless Christian is farthest from God. But those who are not careless in these matters, and will know just what they are worth, face to-day another question not less but more imperative, "What am I worth in the treasure of the inner life? how does that account stand? What I am worth *in* the world I shall make sure about; but then what I am worth *to* the world, and the world to me, demands still more close and careful investigation."

And I can well imagine, how, in helping you to answer this question, I might congratulate you, first of all, on the fact that you are another year nearer death and eternity. This must be the burden of all that is heard to-day from

those who seem to believe it is the whole duty of man to show—

“How earth is foul, and heaven is gracious.”

If they are right in their showing, there is a great outburst of congratulation through all Christendom, because one year more has gone, and presently the time will come when we shall exchange this life for another.

The lad, working at his tasks in the distant school, may love the school; but, on a tablet set in a corner of his heart, you will find written, “So many weeks since school began; only so many more, and then I go home.” And the stout little heart beats faster, and the eyes grow misty, sometimes, with the happy anticipation. The pilgrim grows always more glad as he nears his Mecca or Jerusalem. The outer edge of the desert is seen with rapture by the traveller who has been jolting and rocking for days on the back of a grunting camel. The sailor, over half-way across the water, pledges the port he is bound for. There is no one thing I can think of, akin to our common comparisons between this world and another, that ought not to make us glad we are so much nearer done with this than ever we were before. Is this earth a desert land,—a valley and shadow of death,—an enemy’s country? Is it true, as the Hymn-book has it that—

“Prickly thorns through all the ground  
And mortal poisons grow;  
And all the rivers, that are found,  
With dangerous waters flow?”

Then well may we be thankful, that we are so much nearer done with pains and poisons and dangers for ever and ever more.

And yet I doubt sincerely whether one sermon will be preached to-day, in which, from first to last, this doctrine will be pushed to its inevitable conclusion; whether one man will say, “Brethren, I congratulate you that soon you will die, and insist on your accepting my congratulations as the inevitable sequence of all I have said about earth and heaven since the first of January last.” If the man would let his

people alone, they might let the thing pass as one of the absurdities into which the best-regulated pulpits are liable to fall; but, if he insisted on a reply, it would probably be, "If that is the logic of your teaching this year, next year you must change your logic, or we will change our minister."

So this "Where art thou?" urges the preacher, first of all, to ascertain the worth of his own lessons. It comes to the pulpit before it comes to the pews; and, if in his own honest heart the preacher is aware that there is something wrong in this summing-up, he is bound to see where it is. He will see then that the result is wrong, because the statement is wrong. I dare not tell a man I am glad he is so much nearer his end, because I have been saying what is not true about his life. In the last test, God has seen to it, that nature should be stronger than such grace as that. I tell men this world is a valley of desolation,—a vain show; and its life a cross, a burden, and a disappointment: and that heaven is all that can be imagined and more of blessedness. Yet I dare not say then to my friend, "I am glad you are soon to die." What makes me afraid? Certainly, not that the future is not what I say, and infinitely more. The trouble is, I have got hold of a lop-sided truth, when I make earth nought and heaven every thing. And the truth is, this earth is my home now as certainly as heaven will be, and the life that now is a blessing as surely as that which is to come. This life is not a vapor, the flash of a shuttle through the loom, a tale that is told, a withered glass-blade; and the truest seer that ever looked into its heart,—Jesus Christ,—never said it was. It is the most solid and certain thing I know of in this universe, after the life of God. Is it a cross? it is also a crown. Is it a burden? it is a blessing. Are there thorns in it? there are roses. Do mortal poisons grow in? let me find out their secret, and I can make them divine medicines. The waters are dangerous; but they make a province as the garden of God, and power is given to breast them, master them, and make them ministers. The living swim: the dead only float. The leaf falls: the young bud shoots. I am quoting Job sitting in his ashes, when I say

hard things about life ; not Jesus sitting on the Mount, or by the shore. Let me be true in my living ; then I shall rejoice that I live, and shall not fear to die. A great German has said, that "to the blessed eternity itself there is no other handle than this instant." Do I think of God as in heaven? he is here too, or he is not there : of angels? angels are all about me : of golden streets? I prefer green sward, and so shall get it. Do I believe in heaven as somewhere to go? it is first something to be. Heaven is a temper, then a place. In a word, the question, "Where art thou?" can find only one answer from any fair-living man. I am in this world, and am glad of it. The more I find it out, the more I believe in it, and thank God for it. And I mean to hold on to it as long as I can, just as a sound-hearted apple holds on to its tree, that I may get every ray of its sunlight, every moment of its darkness, every drop of its dew, and every dash of its wind and rain. The holy life is the life whole to this present world ; keeping its laws, chording with its harmonies, true to it every time, and to the life that is in it ; discerning always between the world and its wickedness, and holding on to the one with all my might, that I may be able to master the other,—as a good swimmer holds on to the water, and so destroys its power to hurt him.

On this ground I congratulate every earnest man and woman on the close of another year, not because it has lifted us out of life, but because it has lifted us into life,—not that we are older, but that we are more,—and not that the year has been all any one of us would wish it, either for ourselves, our friends, or our country ; but that, in the great sweep of the eternal, it was the next thing to be and to do. So, in the light of a boundless life, of which this is but a small section, and in which a loving loyalty to this world, as God has made it, is a prime element for the blessedness of the life to come, I congratulate myself and you, that we have had another year of its influences, to abide with us for ever.

Then our question presents itself in another way. The fact that I am not to be hustled through my life, but to abide in it and love it, makes it imperative that I shall know how it is to

be done. And I will say a word on that, first, in its most material aspects; after, as I may. When this fearful and wonderful frame was created, and became the visible sign of myself, there was hidden in its secret chambers so many years of life. I could begin from the day I became accountable, and use those years wisely; could write "value received" through my early manhood, my perfect prime, and my ripening age, at the foot of every one of them, and so use this world as not abusing it; or I could overdraw my account, as Burns did, and Byron, and many another, and close up before forty. This is what is commonly called fast living; and it is *fast* living: but if I have studied life to any purpose, that is by no means confined to the drunkard, debauchee, and black-leg. In the simple matter of using up two days in one, of exhausting the vital forces of life, of wasting more energy in one day than I can recover in one night, or in six days than I can recover in seven nights and a Sunday,—I can do that at the desk, the bar, the anvil, or the plough. And so, this day, if you are still young or in your prime, yet feel that you are not what you were in health and strength a year ago, my question, "Where art thou?" touches you. You are overdrawing your account, my friend; and, if you don't take care, you will be a bankrupt. There will come a day when you will find that nature has shut down on you, and will not listen to any plea of necessity. If you are predestined to live the mere life, but exhaust the vital life, you may drift on to seventy; but you have done at forty, and the rest will be only one weary drag; and no man can judge for you how much you can afford to spend. Every man must watch the balance for himself, and answer the question to God.

But let me not be misunderstood. There may come a time in the life of a man, when no consideration of how much life he is spending per day ought to weigh with him for a moment; any more than, in imperative need, he shall hesitate whether he will put himself in deadly peril, to defend some sacred trust; which his refusal to defend at any risk of life would render the rest of the life he might have to live worse than worthless.

But I am now speaking of that even responsibility that comes to us all,—of the every day life; and the way a man

may overdraw it, to make money, or win some bauble ; or even to win some good prize in ten years, that ought to take him twenty. You say I do not mean to carry on in this way. I will turn over a new leaf ; but I *must* have so much money first, or such a position, or have done such a thing. I have only one answer. You will probably get the money or the position : you may not ; but the chances are you will. Then you will not turn over a new leaf ; or, if you do, it may be too late. "Behold ! now is the day of salvation." There never was a time when the temptation to be reckless of this life was so heavy and urgent as it is to-day ; or when we needed so to hold on to the old steadfast idea, that a preacher shall be shut out, by the very tenure of his office, from the ordinary traffic of the world, that his eye may be clear, and his spirit unaffected by what dangerously affects those that wait on his ministry. It is a graver moral blunder for a pastor to speculate in corner lots or oil stocks, than if Gabriel came down from heaven to do it ; because he stands nearer his people than Gabriel can hope to do ; and the moment he casts himself into these great swirling currents of temptation, he loses the quality for which, above all things, they ought to value him,—the serene, unworldly heart. For it is impossible that even prayer can keep the preacher's spirit open, watchful, and tremulous to the ever-varying dangers of the times, if he is not in some way separate from them too ; and he may be sure, that no exhortation he can give about a dangerous love of money can be more than sounding brass, when once he has touched the edge of the greed himself.

And be sure I do not say this that I may merely urge the husbanding of our powers, and the enjoyment of the fulness of our life, though that is a right good thing ; but greatly because, by this means, we rise into the better life while we are still in this, and make a heaven about us of common blessing.

Scott wrote "Guy Mannering" in a few weeks. It is full of the aromatic sap of his genius. When he did this, he was in his perfect prime ; his poems were but the forerunners of his best novels, and these novels are the crown of glory on his life. But Scott had one fatal greed : he wanted to create Abbots-



ford, as it were, in a day. There was no glory in this, as there is no glory in the million things a million other men have done, who might have done better. But, to make *Abbotsford*, he used up two days in one,—poured out book after book with a prodigality that astonished the world. The result was, that Scott, who had the frame and stamina of a giant, began to break down. In this there were two results: first, loss of health, that concerned Scott rather than the world; second, loss of inspiration, that concerned the world as much or even more than the man. For, just as the man lost his vitality, the new books lost their peculiar and perfect power. They deteriorated from genius to talent, and from talent to common place; and then the spell that had held the world, lifted men into better atmospheres, and quickened and nurtured human souls, was gone. *Abbotsford* was created, and then after that, redeemed; but the world was the loser by all it had a right to expect of its noble son. If instead of driving and draining his genius like a slave, he had awaited reverently for its welling, then, when the sweet waters ran freely, had turned them into the golden channels of great books, for the blessing of the world, he ought to have written his last books as he wrote his first,—as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. He did write them as he was moved by his publishers. The consequence was, that the publishers got the book; but the world did not get that without which it was as worthless as a book of old sermons.

I mention this as an illustration of the deeper meaning of my question. In such a life as that of Channing, there seems to be an intimate relation between the frail and delicate organism and the transcendent genius. We are at a loss to guess whether such a soul could find a fitting instrument in any other body,—whether it could pierce and soar so, imprisoned in the mould of common men. But I conceive this to be universally true: if a man begins life with a powerful soul in a powerful frame, and then wastes that frame in a reckless disregard of those laws on which it depends,—then the failing human power to eat and drink and run and laugh and sleep and whistle and sing, is the indication of a failing spiritual power, of which

these are but the signs. He is a full-orbed man no longer: what he has lost is but a shadow of what the world has lost in him. He may intensify as he becomes unwell, and run morbidly to some one thing, as a Strasburg goose runs to liver, —may become notable for that one thing for a time, among men as morbid as himself. But he has lost the most celestial thing, in trying to create the more material; as Scott lost the power to write books like "Old Mortality," in the morbid desire to create Abbotsford.

I do not, therefore, ask so much what is to be the result of any waste of power to you; that is your own business: but what will it be to your home and the world at large. Out of your life there flows, every day, some spiritual influence, as true in its nature and degree as any ever known. You may never write a book or even a letter; but then no more did Jesus Christ. No mistake can be greater than to suppose, that I have done my duty by my home, in filling it with plenty; or my children, in securing for them the best teachers; or that I have been true to my marriage vow, because I have kept myself pure, and never stinted my wife in her expenses; or to Church and State, because I have voted right on election day, and been, in my time, a deacon. O friend! I tell you, unspeakably more than this is that mysterious and most holy influence of a sound, elastic, cheerful human soul in a body to match. I see, once in a while, a home in which I am just as sure it is impossible for the children to go radically wrong, as it is for the planet to turn the other way on her axis. The whole law of their life, of their spiritual gravitation, is fixed by the strong, sweet father and mother; resolute, above all, to preserve this perfect right attraction, though there may be less, at last, in counted dollars.

I have seen men as full of chivalric and loving attention to their wives, as tender and thoughtful and delicate as in the old courting days, when their fate still hung on the woman's will. I see men sometimes in society, who will let no pressure of business or care crowd them so that they cannot afford time for sympathy, and to give a helping hand in matters that are above the price of money, giving what money cannot buy,—the light.

and life of an unworn nature. And all this is what I would ask most urgently in my question, Where are *thou*?

Is the tide of success in your profession flooding out your home, and human sympathies, and excellences? Have you less time for a thoughtful loving-kindness toward others than you once had? less time for your children, to chat with them, and play with them, and tell them stories? less time to give to your wife, who has, perhaps, been waiting all day, with a budget of things to tell you,—of no interest to you, probably, in the abstract, but the current coin of her little domestic world and life.

You may be too much done over to care for any of these things :—then I will tell you what will happen. After a while your children will cease to tease you, or your wife to tell you what is in her heart ; and a cloud will settle on your home and its life you cannot account for ; the old Eden look will leave it, thorns and thistles will spring up about it ; every thing will change to your altered nature. And then, instead of looking right in the eyes of the trouble, and trying to amend it, you will do what this first man did in similar circumstances,—turn round and blame your wife.

Dear friend, whether man or woman, I ask you, as we part, whether you have kept this old wholesome faith in, and love for the life that now is ; because I really know of no way so sure to the loftiest and holiest life of heaven, as that which lies directly through a deep, quick sympathy with the life on earth. When we lose that, we lose what the sap is to the tree ; the mediator between our being and the life about us and above us ; the secret of all our growth and fruitfulness, as of all our glory and joy.

And I have said not a word to the hearers of my sermon I do not say to the readers of my book.



